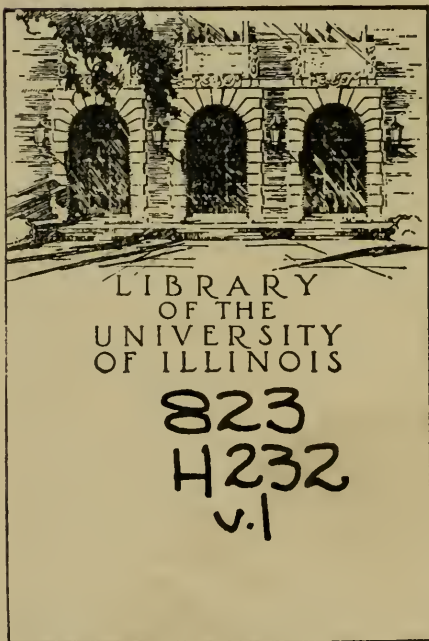


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Isabella Baker

HAROLD THE EXILE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle and each dreadful scene.
In darkness and in storm he found delight :
Nor less than when on ocean wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling shene.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul :
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear so sweet, he wished not to controul.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

* * * * *

1819.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTERS.

To —

On the Lake of Geneva,
August 10, 18--.

IF there be any period when the name of sister is capable of conveying a more than common sensation of pleasure to the heart, it must surely be now, when in addressing it to you from a foreign land, it is associated in my imagination with the beloved idea of home, and the tender recollections of affection : yet shall I confess to you, that when at my departure, you requested a *journal de mon voyage*, you imposed a task upon me, which I find it very difficult to fulfil.

I cannot, like the traveller that journeys *en courant*, amuse you with a list of routes

and inns, describe cities I never entered, and countries I passed through in the night, or detail the entertainment at every stage, and the squabbles with *mon hôte* about the charge ; I cannot, like the mere picturesque traveller, expatiate through whole pages on the beauties of a moss-covered wall, or be ready to fall into raptures at the sight of an old tree mantled with ivy ; neither do I expect, like the sentimental traveller, to meet adventures at every step, and behold the hero or heroine of a romance in the *petite villageoise*, or saucy postilion : yet I have gazed with admiration on nature in all her varied forms of sublimity and beauty, and the view of rustic felicity always awakens a correspondent emotion in my heart. But all this has been detailed a hundred different times, by a hundred different writers, who possess the talent of embellishment in a far higher degree than myself, and leaving the minutiae of our journey hither to be discussed in

person by the fire-side at C——, I prefer introducing you at once to the spot where myself and my amiable *compagnon de voyage* have at present fixed our abode.

To a mind depressed by recent calamity, and a frame languid from long protracted disease, the hurry of a gay and crowded metropolis, and the petty cares and pleasures of fashionable society, present but few attractions, and a change from the noise and dissipations of Paris to the quiet seclusion of a cottage on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, could not fail of being highly gratifying to Lady G. For her sake I became as you know an exile from my native land, and cheerfully relinquished all the endearments of maternal and relative affection, to accompany her abroad in search of renovated health and happiness ; both I fear for ever blasted, by the untimely death of an only and beloved son, who fell in the service of his country, at the moment when victory

had crowned him with laurels, too dearly purchased with his life.

And here, my dear sister, you will, I know, require a more minute description of our present residence, that you may be able in your solitary reveries to form some definite idea of the spot which your sister inhabits ; but description must fail in conveying to you an adequate idea of the fairy cottage from whence I now address you.

Situated on the lovely shores of the loveliest lake in Europe, it seems to share in the aspect and character of the surrounding scene, where nature, throned in “ mountain majesty,” sheds on every object a portion of her own loveliness and tranquillity. Mountains whose fantastic forms defy the wildest flight of imagination to give them a resemblance. Rocks crowned with foliage, and mantled with vines ; every variety of land, of wood and water unite in rich assemblage to

complete the most perfect picture ever sketched by the hand of nature. Nor are there wanting those signs of social life, which unite the sentiment of moral and natural beauty in the mind of man. The rustic hamlet, the princely mansion, and the consecrated temple alike embellish and diversify the prospect, which is terminated by the spires of the city of Geneva, glistening in the distant horizon.

Our cottage, whose white walls are almost hid by clustering roses and honeysuckles, stands in the midst of a garden, which is literally a paradise of sweets, divided by a low paling from the banks of the lake, whose blue expanse of water is spread before us. A grove of limes shelters it from the northern blast, and from the window where I now sit, I can discern the church spire and white houses of the village of —— peeping from amidst the foliage which embowers them. In this spot, we enjoy all the charms of soli-

tude, without its weariness. Books, music, and the pencil, agreeably deversify the scene within doors ; and without, the cultivation of my flowers, and occasional excursions in the surrounding country, fill up every interval of leisure, and leave no room for the indulgence of *ennui*.——Already have I visited Clarens Vevay, and la Melerie, immortalized to the lovers of genius by the romantic pen of Rousseau. The vivid colourings which his ardent imagination sheds over every thing he describes, have still left their traces upon them, and the rocks, the mountains, and the groves, which were the scene of his impassioned reveries, still glow with other hues than those of nature ; those delightful hues with which fancy embellishes the objects of her reverence and admiration.

Yet shall I confess to you, a sentiment which never fails to accompany every perusal of this celebrated romance, and which I do not remember to have heard

expressed by any other person, I mean the infinite disproportion which exists between the characters he has drawn of the lovers, and the refined and ardent passion he so eloquently portrays : nor can I admit that a man who is represented as violating every law of honour and gratitude, by the seduction of his pupil, or the woman who sacrifices the dignity of conscious virtue to the indulgence of an illicit passion, who criminales herself with one man and imposes upon another, are fit objects to serve as examples of the force of that sentiment which has been termed the noblest and most congenial to the human heart.

The only part of Eloisa's life in which I can truly feel interested is when she becomes the wife of Wolmar, and by the uniform virtue and propriety of her conduct in that character, atones, in some measure, for her former frailty. But the precedent is dangerous, and here, I think, lies the immorality so often and

so justly urged against this work, where, as I before remarked, the picture of love is most admirable, while that of the lovers is only calculated to disgust or to mislead. An important distinction which the readers of Rousseau might, perhaps, do well to remember.

But I shall tire you with this long digression, and Lady G. beckons me to join her in the garden, where her feeble hands are vainly endeavouring to raise the trailing branches of a white clematis, which the wind has blown down from our rustic porch. Alas ! when I contemplate her altered form, as she wanders among these lovely, but evanescent productions of Nature, I fancy her endowed only with an existence as fragile and fugitive as their own ; but she again repeats her invitation, and I will no longer delay subscribing myself,

ALICIA W.

September 2, 18--.

Vive la Romance ! Vive la Fantasia !
Such methinks will be your exclamation,

when you shall hear that I, who have all my life declaimed against wild and improbable adventures, am now sat down to detail one as mysterious and romantic as ever floated in the warm imagination of young eighteen, just emancipated from the trammels of a boarding-school education. But, *badinage* apart, an incident has occurred which has excited no small degree of interest in my mind, and without any supernumerary aid from the glowing colours in which youth and fancy delight to clothe the objects of their attraction, is capable in itself of eliciting conjecture and surprise.

The state of Lady G.'s health has hitherto prevented her from extending her walks beyond the immediate vicinity of our habitation ; but she would not suffer this circumstance to restrain my natural inclinations to wandering ; and in my solitary rambles about the neighbourhood, I frequently encountered a stranger, who, like ourselves, appeared a visitant to

these delightful scenes, and whose air announced him above the common class. He was young, and the beauty of the finest countenance I ever beheld, acquired an additional interest from apparent ill health, and an expression of the deepest melancholy. As he evidently courted solitude, I carefully shunned every thing which might look like design in our occasional rencontres; but chance favoured my wishes (for that I did wish a more intimate knowledge of this interesting stranger I pretend not to deny), and frequently gave me a sight of him, at times when he was himself unconscious of being observed. Often at sunset I have seen him pursue his solitary walk along the banks of the lake, with a hasty and unequal step, as if impelled by some important object, then suddenly pausing, he has surveyed the scene around with the fixed unconscious gaze of deep abstraction, while the half closed lips seemed ready to give utter-

ance to the ideas in which the mind was absorbed.

At other times I have beheld him clamber the almost inaccessible summits of the mountains which environ this lovely solitude ; have caught a glimpse of his graceful figure, as he sprang from point to point among the rocks, or leant over the yawning precipice, or roaring torrent, and frequently (as I have since heard), when a sudden tempest agitates the waters of the lake, he will pass whole nights on its stormy bosom in a small boat, with no companion but the reveries of a melancholy or disordered imagination. No one could tell who he was, or from whence he came ; but his peculiar habits, and that air of sadness which was visible in his whole deportment, have given him in the neighbourhood the touching appellation of the melancholy man. To me there is something peculiarly sacred in the grief that shuns observation, and for worlds I could not have obtruded on the

stranger's evident desire of seclusion ; but chance again favoured my wishes in producing an interview, as unlooked for, as it was extraordinary.

The compassionate feelings of myself and Lady G. had been forcibly excited by the distressed situation of a poor family in our vicinity, who, by the premature loss of an industrious father, had been left exposed to all the miseries of penury, aggravated by an intermittent fever, which had for some time raged amongst them. With her accustomed goodness, Lady G. had sought out, and relieved these unhappy sufferers, and I now proceeded by her desire to carry them a fresh supply of medicine, and some necessary articles of clothing for a young expected visitant to this world of sorrow. I was received by the mother with every demonstration of gratitude and joy ; and when she had exhausted all her expressions of acknowledgement, "I am sure, Mademoiselle," she added, "you bring good luck along

with you ; for the very day you were last here, there comes a young gentleman so pale, and so handsome, and so affable, who inquired into all the particulars of my story, and gave me this"—shewing a piece of gold which she had carefully wrapped up in an old silk handkerchief. " They say, Mam'selle, he is a man-hater, and melancholy, and I don't know what ; but he has been very good to me and mine, and has promised to allow me something every week till my children get well."

She had scarcely concluded her eulogy when the door opened, and the object of it appeared before me. At the sight of a stranger he seemed embarrassed, but soon recovering himself, he apologized for his intrusion with the air and language of a man, who was well acquainted with all the forms of polished society ; but though he addressed me in French, there was something in his tone and manner which led me to believe he

was not a native of the country whose language he had adopted. Nothing farther passed between us at that time, and he continued to address some trifling questions to Marguerite, till I arose to depart, when suddenly starting from his seat, he requested permission to escort me safe home. As I believe this offer was prompted by politeness rather than inclination, I at first hesitated in accepting it, but he pressed it with so much earnestness that my reluctance was at length overcome, and after promising another visit to Marguerite, we set out on our return.

The scene we had just quitted furnished conversation during the walk, and was only changed by my companion to that of the natural beauties around us, on which he expatiated with taste and feeling. Of himself he said nothing; nor did he manifest the slightest curiosity to be acquainted with any particulars relative to my situation here; but when on

arriving at home, I earnestly entreated him to enter and take some refreshment after his walk, he politely but firmly declined the invitation, and hastily wishing me a good morning, was out of sight before I could call Lady G., on whose mind the apparently extraordinary circumstances attached to this mysterious stranger, have made almost as much impression as on my own.

And here, for the present, ends this adventure ; which, with all the delightful romance and novelty that embellish it, will want, I fear, the grand requisites of such delectable histories, a *dénouement*, a lover, and a wedding. A few years ago, perhaps, my imagination might have given a full scope to its creative powers on these inspiring topics, but, alas ! the fairy dreams of youth have been chased by the sad realities of riper years ; and the gay anticipations of fancy have yielded to the cold, dull suggestions of sober reason, which impertinently

whisper to me, “ that this stranger is perhaps married, or perhaps he is in love, and that whether he is a husband or a bachelor, it can make no difference to me.” It is all true, good madam ; and as I have neither a lover nor a husband in view, it is totally indifferent to me which is the real state of the matter ; but it is not a case of equal indifference, that he is a stranger in a foreign land, oppressed with ill health and despondency. Though dead to love, the heart may still be alive to all the social and sympathising affections, and I feel it would give me pleasure to offer the consolations of friendship to this interesting stranger. But I am now going to fall into the error I have just deprecated ; and for fear I should conclude this letter by some rhapsody or other, I will at once subscribe myself,
&c. &c. A. W.

Sept. 20, 18--.

THERE is certainly an era in the exist-

ence of some people which seems destined by its incidents to contradict the general tenure of their past lives, and I think you will be inclined to adopt this opinion, when I inform you that the subject of my last letter is not only a resident beneath the same roof with myself, but is actually now slumbering on a sofa in the apartment where I am at present writing. But so it is ; and that you may not imagine all the sprites of fairy land are let loose upon this world, to turn the brains of sober-minded mortals like myself, I must proceed to give you some connected detail of this new adventure.

Several days passed after our accidental *rencontre* at the cottage of Marguerite, without my seeing any thing more of the stranger ; and I began to think he had entirely quitted the neighbourhood, when one morning, as myself and Lady G. sat at work, a servant came to inform us that a woman

without requested permission to speak with *mi ladi Anglaise*. She was ordered to be admitted, and to my great surprise I beheld *Marguerite*, whose situation, and the heat of the day, would not, I should have supposed, have allowed her to come so far.

“ I hope, *mi ladi*,” she began with a profound courtesy, and addressing herself to *Lady G.* “ you will excuse the liberty I am taking, but when I heard *Monsieur* was your countryman, and remembered how good you were to me—

“ What do you mean, *Marguerite*,” I exclaimed (for *Lady G.*’s fluttering nerves, which are easily shaken by any sudden surprise, would not admit of her speaking immediately), “ who is the person you allude to ?”

“ Oh, *mam’selle !*” she replied, “ do you not recollect the young gentleman you saw the other day at my cottage ? I greatly fear he is dying.” It was now my turn to be silent, and *Lady G.*’s to inter-

rogate Marguerite, who continued as follows :

“ I went yesterday evening, mi ladi, to buy some trifles at ———, and while I was standing in Jeanne Dubois’s shop, who should come in but the mistress of the Black Lion. So she began talking to Jeanne, and I soon found out that there was a strange gentleman lodging in her house, who was very ill. ‘So,’ says she, ‘for my part I don’t know what to make of it. There is not a creature about him who knows who he is ; and when I ventured to ask him if I should send to any of his friends, to let them know how ill he was, he fell into such a fit of raving, that my hair stood on end to hear him. I wish he had never come into my house ; for, as my husband says, we shall not only perhaps never be paid for our trouble, but may be, if he should die, shall have the charge of burying him also.’ ”

“ Unhappy young man ! ” sighed Lady G., “ destined, perhaps, to perish thus

prematurely in a foreign land, far from all that love—from all that will deplore thee.”

These words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, at once betrayed to me the nature of her reflections ; and eager to divert the train of thought this incident had awakened, I desired Marguerite to proceed in her recital.

“ Well, mam’selle,” she continued, “ when I heard this, I began to question her myself, and soon found out what I had all along suspected, that this sick gentleman was the same who had been at my cottage : but she could tell me no more about him, than that he was from England, and called himself Delamere.

“ I went home very sorrowful, for I thought to myself, what a sad thing it was for such a young gentleman to be sick in a strange place, with nobody that knew or cared for him, and how it would grieve his poor mother’s heart, if he had one, when she heard he had died, away

from all his friends. I hope *mi ladi* is not ill," addressing Lady G., whose changing colour denoted the agonies inflicted by the unconscious Marguerite.

"Go on, Marguerite," I exclaimed; "we begin to be impatient."

"So then, *mam'selle*, as I sat pondering all this over, it came into my head, that I would come here, and tell you what I had heard, for I thought as you too were from England, you might chance to know some of the poor gentleman's friends; and I was sure that *mi ladi* who had been so good to me, would not leave him to die, without any one to see he was well done by, or give him Christian burial. So I set out this morning, and though I had much ado to get here, I would sooner have died by the way, than not have done every thing in my power for the poor young gentleman who had been so good to me and mine."

Here Marguerite concluded her simple narrative, and Lady G. after warmly

commending her gratitude and humanity, and ordering her some refreshment, dismissed her with a gratuity, and a promise of an immediate inquiry about the object of her solicitude.

“ Alicia, my dear,” exclaimed her ladyship, as soon as she was gone, “ we must not neglect the example this good creature has given us. I will instantly accompany you to ———, for delays are criminal in a case like this, and may be attended with fatal consequences to him we desire to serve.”

I signified my ready compliance with her proposal, and the cabriolet which served for Lady G.’s occasional excursions, being ready, we set out on our visit of humanity.

On arriving at ——— we found the tale of Marguerite corroborated by the mistress of the inn, with the additional information of the stranger’s being much worse since the preceding day—violent delirium and deep stupors alternately

succeeding each other, in which latter state he at present lay. Lady G. requested to see him ; and we were conducted to a mean, confined apartment, where, extended upon a wretched bed, destitute of furniture, and apparently without any requisite comforts, we beheld the interesting object of our visit. The stupor into which he had fallen resembled a profound sleep, and the deadly paleness of his countenance was rendered still more striking by its contrast with the dark lashes which rested upon his cheek, and a few straggling curls of ebon hair that hung over his forehead. Lady G. continued to gaze upon him, till her eyes swam in tears ; and well divining the ideas which occupied her mind, I was rejoiced when her attention was called off by the entrance of the apothecary, who had been sent for at her arrival. To a considerable degree of skill in his profession Monsieur La Roche united great politeness and humanity ; and, in

the conversation that ensued, we learnt that he still entertained great hopes of his patient, whose disorder he pronounced to be a fever, originating in neglect and excessive fatigue.

In answer to Lady G.'s inquiry as to the possibility of his immediate removal, he declared, that whatever objections might be urged against it, they were counterbalanced by the advantages to be derived from a purer air, and greater quietness than could be obtained in a noisy and confined apartment in a village inn ; " united," he added, bowing to Lady G., " with the care and attention he would doubtless experience from Madame." Our plans were soon arranged, the landlady called up, and Delamere (as I must in future call him) being carefully wrapped in blankets, was placed in the cabriolet with Lady G., while I remained behind, under the escort of the good doctor, to make some arrangements for the comfort of our new guest. They

were soon completed ; and after giving orders for his trunks to be sent to the cottage, and settling some trifling accounts with his hosts, who seemed glad to be relieved of their charge, I hastened to rejoin Lady G. She, on her part, had been no less actively employed ; and on my arrival at the cottage, I found the stranger already in possession of his new apartment, and attended by a tender and experienced nurse, who had resided many years in Lady G.'s family, and had accompanied her abroad. And here, my dear sister, I will for the present conclude my eventful history, as the hero of it is just awakened, and will require assistance, to amuse the heavy hours of a slow convalescence—peculiarly heavy to him, in whom the dark shadowings of an accidental or constitutional melancholy appear to have clouded the bright sunshine of youth and hope, and darkened the colourings of a brilliant imagination with a tint of sombre, yet affecting gloom. I

will write again shortly, and in the mean time believe me, &c.

Sept. 24, 18--.

I again resume the narrative, commenced in my last, while Lady G. and our interesting invalid are gone out in the cabriolet, to enjoy one of those delicious days which autumn sometimes steals from summer, as emulous to enhance the glowing beauties of a September landscape, by the bright sun-beams of June.

For some days after the removal of Delamere to this place, he continued so ill, that his existence seemed suspended only to a hair, which every moment threatened to exterminate. During this period, no ray of reason illumined his darkened mind ; but the connections of intellect were supplied by the wild disjointed imagery of a disordered fancy, and his mind wandered incessantly to scenes with which his lucid faculties appear to have been but too deeply impressed : some-

times addressing his unconnected ravings to the imaginary beings of his own creation; at others, representing himself as abandoned by all mankind, even at the moment when myself and Lady G. knelt beside him, and held the burning hand, whose throbbing pulses indicated the source of his disordered fantasies. In this interval of suspense and anxiety, Delamere received the most unremitting attention from those around him, not excepting myself and Lady G. who shared with the careful Glover the task of nursing the invalid. To the skill and assiduity of Monsieur La Roche was superadded the advice of an experienced physician from Geneva, and nothing was to be desired but the concurrence of Providence in our united exertions.

The crisis at length arrived, when having persuaded Lady G. to retire to rest, whose delicate health would, I feared, be injured by her late exertions, I joined Glover and Monsieur La Roche, in the

apartment of Delamere, the latter having resolved not to quit his patient that night. The stupor which always succeeded a long fit of delirium, had gradually given place to a deep sleep, which, according to the opinion of Dr. H. would terminate the event of his disorder. It had already lasted several hours, and every moment became more profound, as bending over his pillow I watched each faint and laboured respiration with trembling apprehension, that it might prove his last, while I sought to read in the countenance of the good La Roche a confirmation or contradiction to my fears.

Suddenly the respiration of the invalid became more difficult and impeded, and in the next moment a scarcely audible sigh caught my ear. I believed it was his last ; but, as I started from my knees, overpowered by the emotions I experienced, I felt a faint pressure from the hand I still held in mine, while Delamere unclosing his fine dark eyes, fixed them

upon me, with the doubtful, vacant gaze of scarce-recovered perception.

“He lives!—He will be restored!” I exclaimed, while the tears of long-suppressed feeling burst, unconsciously, from my eyes. Monsieur La Roche approached—and, after examining the state of his patient’s pulse, confirmed my hopes of a favorable change having taken place in his disorder; he, however, imposed silence upon Delamere, who testified some anxiety to be informed of his present situation; and, after giving him a general assurance that he was with friends, who were truly anxious for his recovery, I stole, unobserved, from the room, and retired to my own apartment, with a mind lightened of a heavy burthen.

In a few days Delamere was so far convalescent as to be able to sit up in a dressing-room adjoining to the chamber he occupied, when he sent a polite message to Lady G. requesting he might be allowed an opportunity of expressing his sense

of the obligations she had conferred upon him. We accordingly repaired to his apartment, which some friendly hand had decorated with the last flowers of the season, to refresh, by their fragrance, the languid senses of the drooping invalid, who received us with the most touching and graceful expressions of gratitude, for the kindness which he said "had been so profusely lavished upon him." More he would have added on the subject, but Lady G., whose goodness blushes at its own praise, eagerly sought to evade a theme which was painful to the delicacy of her feelings, and adroitly turned the conversation to the pleasure she felt at seeing him so much recovered.

"If existence," said Delamere, with a half-suppressed sigh, "be termed a blessing, I am, in a great measure, indebted to your Ladyship for its prolongation.—Why then would you shun those thanks which are so justly your due?"

"I hope," replied Lady G., without

noticing the latter part of this sentence, "that many years of happiness will convince you of the reality of the blessing you seem disposed to doubt."

Delamere sighed, and was silent.

"Come, come, my young friend," resumed Lady G., "I see your late illness has affected your spirits, and must no longer leave you to the indulgence of these melancholy musings. Till you are able to join our family circle, Alicia and myself will use our best efforts to enliven your solitude. My powers of amusement, she added, with an involuntary sigh, are almost exhausted; but Alicia will, I am sure, endeavour to supply the deficiency."

Delamere bowed his sense of her proffered kindness, but the smile that played round his colourless lip seemed by its sadness to mock the complacence it was intended to express.

Too delicate ever to pry unnecessarily into the affairs of others, Lady G.

carefully avoided any allusion that could be construed by Delamere into a wish to be acquainted with the particulars of his present situation ; but, as if divining the motive of this reserve, he introduced the subject himself by acquainting her with his name and country, which we had already heard from my hostess of the Black Lion. He added, “ that, possessed of an independent fortune, and master of his own actions, he passed a great portion of his time in travelling, and had already visited various parts of Europe, before the attraction of its romantic scenery, and pastoral simplicity of manners, had induced him to direct his course to Switzerland.— His habits, he continued, (glancing towards me,) were rather eccentric ; and the excessive fatigues to which he had often exposed himself, in his various excursions to explore the solitary and almost inaccessible beauties of the country, had, he believed, in some measure, occasioned his late disorder. His declara-

tion of a speedy departure from Geneva was interrupted by Lady G., who said, with some degree of sportiveness, "That as she had now, like an enchantress of old, succeeded in carrying off the wandering knight to her fairy palace, he must not expect a speedy emancipation."

Delamere attempted to answer her in the same style of *badinage*, but his spirits were not equal to the effort; and, fearful that conversation might be too fatiguing to him in his present debilitated state, we soon afterwards left him to his solitary meditations.

By slow degrees the health of the English stranger repaid, in its amendment, the cares we had sustained; but he still continued extremely weak, and as an increased intimacy afforded me every day additional opportunity of observing the gradual unfoldings of his character and disposition, I perceived that the workings of "the mind diseased," had no inconsiderable share in promoting the continuance

of that corporeal debility from which he suffered. Never, however, did a complaint escape his lips, and it was only from his feeble step and languid countenance that we could discern the excessive weakness which oppressed him. It did not, indeed, require a long intimacy with Delamere to discover that his mind was of no common cast. Endowed with an intellect of the first order, highly cultivated and informed, yet tenacious of discovering to others the information he possessed—reserved in manner, and taciturn in speech, he would yet at times equally astonish and delight us by the force of his language, and the brilliancy and originality of his ideas, and frequently displayed on subjects which interested him, a warmth and intensity of feeling which forcibly contrasted with his generally cold and distant demeanor.

All these different observations led me to expect in Delamere an uncommon su-

periority of the intellectual powers ; and when I added to these remarks, a recollection of his peculiar and eccentric habits, I was prepared for the discovery I have since made—that the young and interesting object of our admiration, is one of those highly-gifted and unfortunate beings, on whom Nature bestows the most admired, most perverted, and most fatal of her endowments, when she confers upon them the gift of genius. If you are disposed, my dear sister, to quarrel with me for this expression, I cannot, I think, do better than detail a conversation which passed yesterday with Delamere on the subject in question, and which will evidence, more than the highest strain of eloquence I could proffer, the insufficiency of the most exquisite genius to confer happiness on its possessors. It may dazzle by its brightness—it may surprise by its originality—it may delight others, and mislead ourselves, but one virtuous action, one pious sentiment, one habitual principle of goodness in a well-

regulated mind, will weigh more in the comparative scale of felicity than the most splendid coruscations of genius where they are wanting.

The cabriolet is returned, and I must resume this subject in my next.

September 26, 18--.

WHAT would the lovers of genius—what would genius itself say, should they know that one on whom nature has deigned not to bestow a single irradiation of its rays, should have the presumption thus to attempt to depreciate their so highly rated talent, that “heaven descended” talent, which was conferred on its possessor, to promote the interests of piety and virtue; but which, by a strange and unnatural perversion, is too frequently converted into a handmaid of sensuality and an encourager of vice? In this age of universal authorship, in which the scribbliomania seems to infect all ranks and professions, from the peer downwards; when our young votaries of dis-

sipation obtrude upon the public eye the recital of their loves and revelries, and the daily prints teem with the love sonnets and sentimental rhapsodies of our romantic misses: in such an age, I repeat, I cannot but congratulate myself that no spark of genius ever shed its bewildering influence on me; and while the advantages of a well-directed education place within my reach the best and noblest productions of ancient and modern times, which genius has produced, I feel but little disposed to lament the absence of a quality, which, though it may elicit admiration, and confer delight, is certain to ensure to him in whom it predominates, a more than common perception of the unavoidable ills of life—but to recur to the conversation alluded to in my last.

I was, as is generally my morning custom, reading aloud to Lady G. while she worked, and Delamere, reclining on a sofa, amused himself with the gambols

of a favorite kitten that sported beside him. Our author was Beattie, the tender, elegant Beattie, where, in his exquisite poem of the "Minstrel," he describes the first indications of genius in a youthful mind, and the eloquent countenance of Delamere furnished a glowing comment on my author's text. "It seems to me", said Lady G. "that Nature has reserved a superior susceptibility of enjoyment for those on whom she has bestowed a poetical genius, which enhances the value of the gift; for not only do they, in a peculiar manner, appropriate to themselves all the boundaries of time and space, but when wearied or disgusted with this terrestrial scene of being, they possess the faculty of creating new regions at will, and arraying an imaginary world in all the colours of reality. I once regretted," she continued with a suppressed sigh, "that one peculiarly dear to me, had not been gifted with this exquisite talent, which appears so calcu-

lated to confer an augmentation of happiness on those by whom it is possessed."

"But does your Ladyship consider," replied Delamere, "that the same keenness of perception, which heightens in such a mind the sense of pleasure, increases likewise the susceptibility of pain, and while the man of inferior endowments sees, in the evils which befall him, nothing more than the common vicissitudes of life, they fall with a supernatural force on him in whom an artificial acuteness of feeling (if I may so express myself) has implanted a new faculty of sufferance."

"Mr. Delamere's reasoning," said I, "coincides with my own observations. It is only necessary to peruse the lives of those who have been celebrated for their superior genius, and the greater number will appear to have been, or at least to have thought themselves, the most unhappy of men."

"Believe me, Lady G.," exclaimed Delamere after a long silence, "the boon

is fatal whose absence you regretted. Oh! trust me, it imparts to wretchedness a keener pang, and refines on pleasure, till it becomes a pain. I could prove to you," he continued, then suddenly interrupting himself, he added,—“but the argument adduced by our friend requires no further elucidation. We will, however, admit that the sorrows of genius are not always self-created, but may derive their origin from ordinary causes or the villainy of mankind.”

“May they not, also, Mr. Delamere,” I replied, “not unfrequently originate in those aberrations from the path of rectitude, which are too often termed the venial errors of an eccentric character, when the votaries of genius disdaining or disregarding those maxims of prudence and decorum, which restrain the less distinguished part of mankind, indulge, without reflection, in all those excesses to which a heated imagination gives the misapplied term of pleasure.”

Delamere answered with some degree of emotion, "That he believed my conclusion was just," and the conversation was soon after dropped, which I have now detailed, to convince you, my dear sister, that the opinion advanced in my last, was not destitute of evidence, since it is thus corroborated by the assertions of one, who, I doubt not, in his general observations on the character and misfortunes of genius, had but too great a reference to his own peculiar situation, and individual experience.

Sept. 28, 18--.

THE more I see and observe of Delamere, the more I am convinced, not only of a mystery being attached to his present situation, but that even his present character is assumed, as far at least, as refers to the station which he has held in society, as well from the high polish of manner which manifests the nature of his education and associates, as from the

acquaintance which he unconsciously betrays with scenes and persons very distinct from the pursuits and connections of a retired country gentleman, as he has uniformly represented himself. This suspicion, which has for some time insinuated itself into my mind, acquired additional weight from an incident of this morning.

The English papers had just been brought into the room where we sat, and Lady G. after hastily running her eye over the one she had taken up, read aloud the following paragraph :—

“ It is confidently asserted, that the beautiful and fascinating Countess of M. who has so long exclusively possessed the sensitive heart of our modern Alcibiades, has at length emancipated him from his chains, while the discarded innamorato is supposed to be living *incog.* in some part of the continent, where he has retired to avoid the *eclat* of an approaching suit in Doctor’s Commons.”

While Lady G. was reading, I unconsciously fixed my eyes on the countenance of Delamere, and was shocked and surprised by the change it exhibited. The deepest flush of crimson succeeded to the deadly hue of his cheek, and a mingled expression of scorn and indignation flashed in his dark eye ; but perceiving I regarded him attentively, he hastily averted his face, and pretended to look out at the window.

“ Perhaps Mr. Delamere,” said Lady G., who had not observed his emotions, “ you may have heard of the Lady to whom this paragraph alludes ? ”

Delamere bowed in silence ; I believe he was unable to reply.

Lady G. continued—“ There was a time when the Countess of Marchmont was a welcome visitor at the mansions of worth and virtue, and never did I know a creature on whom nature had so profusely lavished her gifts ; or by whom

they have been so dreadfully misapplied. The Alcibiades here mentioned is the young, the handsome, and accomplished Lord Harold, alike distinguished by every advantage of fortune and of genius ; and bitterly must I lament that one so highly gifted, so formed by nature to attract and to delight, should ever have been fascinated by a syren, who has darkened his fair fame, and scattered poison over the opening blossoms of sentiment and genius which once ornamented his mind."

"No ! no !" exclaimed Delamere, in a voice scarcely articulate ; " he deserves not your compassion. He merits to be the victim of his mad infatuation." Yet he added in a calmer accent, " he has suffered, cruelly suffered for his folly ; nor has he been altogether so culpable as the world believes."

" You know Lord Harold then ?" said Lady G., with some surprise, and looking earnestly at Delamere, who, as if re-

stored to some secret recollection by her words, replied without hesitation—

“ I have frequently seen him ; but your ladyship is probably far better acquainted with him than myself.”

The anxiety with which Delamere waited an answer to this question, did not escape my observation ; but whatever was the occasion, it was quickly dissipated, when Lady G. replied, “ That her knowledge of Lord Harold was only from report, and that though she had once met him, her recollection of his person was too slight to allow her to recognize him again.”

“ His closest intimate,” said Delamere, “ would have some difficulty in doing so now, for he is much and strikingly altered.”

To Lady G.’s inquiry, of “ where he had last seen Harold ?” he answered, with some confusion, in France ; when believing he would gladly be released from interrogations that evidently dis-

tressed him, I took up another paper, and by introducing a fresh subject, finally succeeded in changing the conversation.

During the remainder of the day, Delamere was gloomy and silent ; and finding our united efforts insufficient to restore his spirits to their usual tone, we suffered him to indulge his lonely reveries without interruption.

Much, and often however, have I meditated on the events of the morning, and an idea obtrudes itself upon my imagination, too romantic to be easily admitted ; yet too probable to be altogether dismissed. Can it be possible, my dear sister, that this melancholy and mysterious Delamere, the unknown, and solitary wanderer of a foreign land, inhabiting the comfortless apartment of a miserable villiage inn, rambling amongst almost inaccessible solitudes, without an attendant, and indebted to the accidental acquaintance of strangers for kindness, and perhaps life ? Can it, I repeat, be

possible, that this hapless, unconnected being should be Lord Harold, the envy of one sex, and the admiration of another, the favourite of fortune, and the darling of the Muses ?

In vain do I repulse this idea as absurd, and chimerical ; it recurs perpetually, and the impression it makes is more forcible, from the rarity of such suppositions to a mind which seldom yields its sober faculties to the influence of a wandering imagination. But I will leave the elucidation of this conjecture to time and accident, which may possibly throw some light on these apparently mysterious circumstances, and subscribe myself for the present, &c. &c.

October 14, 18--.

Delamere has again had a relapse of his disorder, occasioned, I firmly believe, by mental agitation ; but the timely advice of Dr. H. has been attended with the wished-for success, and he is once

more declared convalescent, though in a state of extreme languor and debility. My wonder is, that his constitution does not sink beneath such repeated attacks, which are sufficient to overpower a much stronger frame than Nature seems to have conferred upon him. During this interval, the task has devolved upon me of assisting Glover in her attendance on the invalid; for Lady G. was herself too much indisposed to encounter this new call on our attention; neither could I have permitted it, had she been more equal to the exertion.

In the solitude of a sick chamber, I had full scope for the indulgence of my reflections, and the result served only to strengthen the supposition I hinted in my last; for in the two days of delirium which followed his first seizure, many expressions escaped Delamere, which seemed to own a deeper source than the mere wanderings of a distempered fancy. He frequently called upon the name of Albina,

whom he accused as the destroyer of his peace, his fame, and happiness; then sinking back on his pillow, gave way to a passion of sighs and tears, till exhausted nature again fell into a state of stupor.

On the third evening, while Glover was attending Lady G. I took my lonely station by the bed-side of the invalid, on whose death-like features, the beams of a bright autumnal moon fell with a trembling lustre, adding to their mournful and touching paleness. While I resigned myself to this melancholy contemplation, my thoughts, adopting the suggestions of my imagination involuntarily drew a picture between the wretched and apparently dying Delamere, and the once happy, beautiful, and admired Harold.

Of the history of the latter, I had heard some particulars which had greatly shocked me. I believed him to have been highly culpable; I saw in the affecting object before me, a sad evidence of the sufferings which had originated in a de-

viation from the path of rectitude, and it seemed almost a cruelty to one so blasted in fame, so blighted in happiness, to wish his preservation from that fate which had twice threatened to put a final period to a wretched existence. In the midst of these reflections a faint voice pronounced my name, and at the same moment Delamere drew aside the curtain, and extended his emaciated hand to mine. With an eagerness I have since blushed to recollect, I pressed the hand he gave me in my own ; but my mind was softened by its recent meditations, and twenty-five, my dear sister, is not an age to be influenced by no impulse but that of reflection.

“ I fear, my kind friend,” said Delamere faintly, “ I have occasioned you much trouble, and your generous cares will be ill recompensed by the prolongation of an existence so worthless and miserable as mine.”

“ Oh ! say not so, Mr. Delamere,” I eagerly replied, “ life, I trust, has much

in store for you, and the cares of friendship are in themselves a recompense to the bestower."

"You speak of friendship," exclaimed Delamere. "Alas, the period may arrive when you will disown that sentiment for me."

"Never, I returned with energy. Whatever may hereafter be revealed, rely on finding a friend in Alicia."

Delamere pressed my hand in silence, and at this moment the entrance of Glover interrupted a conversation which had it continued longer, might have afforded an elucidation to my present conjectures. No attempt has been made on his part to renew it; and, as I wish not to enforce an unwilling confidence, I have carefully avoided every expression which could lead him to suppose I doubted the veracity of the tale he told us, or suspected there was any peculiar mystery attached to his present situation. Since he has again resumed his accustomed

place in our little circle, the efforts of myself and Lady G. have been unremitting to cheer the dejected spirits of the melancholy invalid ; but, though our attentions evidently give him satisfaction, and are ever received with demonstrations of gratitude, they have hitherto failed of the desired effect—and every look, every action of Delamere says, in the language of the poet—

“ I have a silent sorrow here,
A grief I ne'er impart ;
It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear,
But it consumes my heart.”

Such at least is the belief of mine, when I contemplate our young friend, as he sometimes sits, with the fixed motionless gaze of deep abstraction, apparently unconscious of every thing around him. At such moments I have marked, with secret concern, the heavy sigh and frequent start of agonized remembrance, which denote the destructive influence of a

deeply-rooted sorrow ; but, whatever that sorrow may be, a proud or sacred solitariness of feeling, which alike shrinks from pity or participation, confines it to the silent sanctuary of his own bosom, where it is imperceptible to all eyes, save those which can read the hoarded tale of woe in the melancholy with which his looks and manners are so strongly tinctured.

Weak as he still continued, Delamere already talked of leaving us, and it was with difficulty his intentions were overruled by the united representations of myself and Lady G.

“ I feel,” he replied, “ that I have too long been an intruder on your goodness, to which I have no title, but the one your generous hearts have given me. Besides,” he added, attempting to smile, “ you must recollect that the comforts and attentions I have experienced under this hospitable roof are quite incompatible with my present erratic mode of life,

and will entirely spoil me if their indulgence is much longer allowed."

"I perceive, Mr. Delamere," said Lady G., a little piqued at his obstinate resistance to her wishes, "that you are not wanting in arguments to justify your desires, and I am to blame in supposing the solitary attractions of a Swiss cottage could have any weight in detaining you from gayer scenes. I entreat your pardon, and will no longer seek to oppose your intentions."

"Oh, do not, do not wrong me!" exclaimed Delamere, with much emotion, "by such suppositions. Believe me, whenever my wayward destiny compels me from this spot, I bid farewell to my last scene of earthly comfort. Never will you cease to have my grateful remembrances, my most fervent prayers, if my prayers can avail ought in promoting your felicity."

While he spoke, Delamere seated himself between us, and taking a hand of

each, pressed them to his lips ; and, as he did so, I felt mine wet with the tears which had dropped upon it.

Extremely affected, we were both of us for some moments unable to speak. Lady G. at length said, with tenderness, “ Forgive me, Delamere, if I have in any way wounded your feelings, and impute it to the anxiety of one who already takes a maternal interest in your welfare. Promise me only,” she continued, “ that you will not quit us till Dr. H. pronounces you sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey.”

To this request (which you may believe I did not fail to iterate) Delamere, with some hesitation, consented ; and, as we have got the good doctor on our side, there is a prospect of his continuing for some time longer an inmate of our fairy habitation.

I have not hinted my suspicions concerning our guest to Lady G., who has observed, and deplores his propensity to

melancholy: but I dread the laugh against me for indulging such romantic surmises; and should my conjectures be ill-founded, I shall regret the injury they will in that case have done their object.

I am interrupted, and must hastily subscribe myself,

A. W.

October 20, 18--.

All my conjectures are realized—all my suspicions confirmed, and the object of our late anxieties is, indeed, no other than the high-born and highly-gifted Harold, whose genius, whose errors, and their consequences, you cannot fail to have heard related in those circles of which you, my dear sister, have been so long the pride and ornament. Yet, culpable as I have believed him to be, dare I confess to you that I am unable to behold Lord Harold without an emotion of deep and tender compassion. The world in general know only of his errors, heightened by the colourings with which envy and detraction never fail to darken

the portraiture they have drawn ; but, in the privacy of his present situation I have beheld the germs of many an amiable quality—many a graceful feeling. I have witnessed also the secret anguish of a heart oppressed with sorrow, or torn perhaps by the “ compunctious visitings of conscience.” But whatever may be his real feelings, his evident unhappiness—his beauty, his soft and fascinating manners, have created an interest for him in the minds of myself and Lady G. which will not soon be obliterated ; and, individually speaking, I feel disposed to make every possible allowance, consistent with rectitude of principle, for the thoughtlessness of youth, the fatal influence of example, the power of flattery, and, above all, the seductions of such a syren as the Countess of Marchmont. But I must endeavour to give you some connected detail of the manner in which this discovery was made.

This evening a violent head-ache had

obliged Lady G. to retire very early to her apartment, and having seen her in bed, I returned to the sitting-room, where I had left Delamere. The lights were not yet brought in, but the moon shone brightly into the windows, by one of which I perceived Delamere, standing with folded arms, in an attitude of deep abstraction. So absorbed, indeed, was he in thought, that he observed not my entrance; and, as I softly approached, I saw him draw from his bosom a small locket, or miniature, but which I could not perfectly distinguish, and as he pressed it to his lips, he repeated, in a low but distinct voice, the following

STANZAS.

Oh, gentle shade, whilst thus I gaze
On all I loved so long in vain,
Remembrance turns to happier days,
When love was unalloyed with pain.

Again that gentle form I see,
Those eyes which all the soul express'd,
The smile that beamed alone on me,
The glance an angel's love confess'd.

I see thee still, in many a scene,
Like thee divinely sweet and fair,
And lost in thoughts of what has been,
Still seek thee, tho' thou art not there.

Still blooms thy bower, as fair to view,
Thy linnet sings with tuneful glee;
Thy roses open to the dew,
And Nature smiles, and breathes of thee.

But thou art gone—and with thee fled
My guiding star to bliss below;
And o'er my path wild Passion shed
A meteor flame of guilt and woe.

Yet still while down the treacherous tide
Of Pleasure's stream my bark was borne,
Oft did I pause, and turn'd aside
From Life's gay scenes o'er Thee to mourn.

Whate'er my faults—whate'er my lot,
In rapture's smile—in sorrow's tear;
Thy gentle form was ne'er forgot,
However wild the mad career.

'Tis past—each earthly joy is flown,
And all I lov'd thy dwelling share;
Yet dearer to my heart is grown
The image shrin'd, and worship'd there.

Unwilling that Delamere should regard me as a prying intruder on his solitary meditations, I would have retired unobserved from the apartment, but ere I could accomplish my design, he turned round, and hastily concealed the portrait in his bosom, while, with some appearance of confusion, he offered me a seat.

“ I have been indulging,” said he, “ in one of those waking dreams which are so frequent with *nos autres génies*, and really did not hear you come in.”

I assured him, I had only that moment entered, as the best way of removing any suspicion he might entertain of my having overheard his soliloquy; and the appearance of tea, soon after, put a period to the conversation; which he did not seem inclined to renew. The perusal of a favourite author supplied our evening's amusement; for Delamere reads with taste, and the observations he makes are calculated to afford as much pleasure as the work which excites them. Our pre-

sent author was Shakespear, in his tragedy of *Coriolanus* ; and there appeared to me a peculiar emphasis in Delamere's manner of delivering the high minded and unbending sentiments of the noble Roman. "I never," said he, as he concluded, "can peruse a composition like this, without feeling elevated above myself ; it conveys me, as it were, to another world, and speaks the language of beings very distinct from the degenerated inhabitants of the present age. *Coriolanus* defying his enemies in his last moments, always recalls my boyish wish that I had lived in an era so calculated to gratify the aspirings of ambition, and confer distinction on superior talents."

"And yet, Mr. Delamere, you are, I think, no great friend to the spirit of patriotism in the present day?"

"No ; because I believe it selfish and venial. Shew me the man that has really sacrificed his private and individual interest to the public weal, and I will no

longer continue incredulous: What can you say to our *Spanish* Patriots, who, after a noble and well maintained struggle for their rights and liberties, have tamely yielded them up to an imbecile and bigoted tyrant, and are seeking to crush in their colonies the spirit they are too degenerate to feel themselves? Or, what shall we think of our *English* Patriots, who call loudly for Reform, yet are unwilling themselves to relinquish a single sinecure that increases the national burthen?"

"At least, Mr. Delamere, you will allow, that amongst these degraded Spaniards, the brave and unfortunate General Porlier deserved the name of Patriot?"

"Certainly," replied Delamere, "if his intentions were, indeed, as pure as he represented them. But I know," added he, smiling, "that Porlier is one of your heroes, and I will, therefore, take for granted every thing you believe in his favour."

"So high," answered I, "is my opinion

of that noble and generous victim of a detestable tyranny, that I do not hesitate in the comparison I have often made, between your favourite Brutus, and my Spanish Hero ; and you must acknowledge your Roman Patriot gains nothing by this comparison. In the latter, the cause he espoused was sullied by ingratitude, and a violation of the most sacred rights of friendship. In the former, the means were as justifiable as the motives were magnanimous and praiseworthy ; and, however his errors may be lamented, his patriotism and the rectitude of his intentions must ever entitle him to admiration and sympathy."

As I ceased speaking, the servant, who had been dispatched that evening to the next post town, entered with a packet of letters, and amongst them were several for Delamere. They were the first he had received since his residence at the cottage, and an involuntary emotion of curiosity fixed my attention upon him, as he perused them. The two first he

opened, did not appear to excite any particular emotions ; but as he hastily glanced over a third, he became evidently agitated. The paleness of his countenance gave way to a deep flush of crimson, and was again replaced by a deadly hue, which even extended to his quivering lips. As he continued his perusal, every feature was alternately expressive of indignation and contempt, and with a laugh perfectly hysterical, he at length exclaimed—

“ Ha ! ha ! this is excellent, on my honor. Ten thousand pounds for the Messalina of her age !—and was my poor Emily sacrificed to such a being ? Oh, it is too, too much !

Overpowered by the emotions which shook his frame, Delamere sunk back on the sofa on which he was seated, and when I flew to his assistance, I found him pale, speechless, and almost insensible. Though much alarmed, I forbore ringing up the servants, whose remarks I

wished to avoid, and applied hartshorn and water, which were fortunately in the room. With difficulty, he swallowed a small quantity, and as I supported his head upon my shoulder, I felt the warm tears fall fast upon my neck, which were probably more efficacious in restoring him than the remedies I had used.

When sufficiently recovered to address me, he appeared desirous that I should impute to sudden indisposition, the evident effects of a disordered mind, and without again venturing a look at the paper which had occasioned this agitation, thrust it hastily into his pocket, and resumed his seat. I was still engaged in perusing the letters I had received that evening, and when they were finished, Delamere inquired, carelessly, "What news there was from England?"

It was cruel, my sister, with such suspicions as I have lately entertained of Delamere's situation, but I had just seen in your last epistle, the account of a suit

having been decided in the Court of King's Bench between the Earl of Marchmont and Lord Harold, with a verdict of ten thousand pounds damages against the latter, and unwilling to pass by so fair an opportunity of obtaining stronger evidence of the truth or fallacy of my conjectures, I could not refrain from mentioning it to Delamere. " 'Tis all very well," he exclaimed, after a moment's silence, with a look and tone that terrified me ; " the enemies of this wretched young man may exult, and even his best friends, (if he has any,) condemn him ; but the world does not know that Harold might have been spared this stroke of fortune, if he had not disdained to criminate the woman that betrayed him. He thought her pure as angels, till seduced by a fatal passion for him to a derogation from her sex's honour, and knew not, till too late, that he was only one amongst the victims of her sorceries and her charms."

" And must the world never hear a

vindication of his conduct? never know how much he has been abused?" I exclaimed, with involuntary emotion.

"Never! returned Delamere, while a glow of resentful pride flushed his cheek, and heightened the towering dignity of his fine figure. The soul of Harold scorns to bend to those that have condemned him unheard. They are gone who would have fondly clung to every extenuation in his behalf; and deprived alike of fame, of love, of happiness, the opinion of a misjudging world is now as indifferent to him, as his future fate. If" added he, with a melancholy smile, "it contains one kind bosom, that will pity while it condemns, he has no farther wish."

The manner in which Delamere pronounced these words, and the pressure of my hand which accompanied them, were almost of themselves sufficient to have satisfied my conjectures; which received ocular demonstration, when after he had retired for the night, I found upon

the seat he had quitted, the envelope of a letter directed to Lord Harold, which had apparently dropped from his pocket when he arose.

All doubt was now removed ; but willing to spare our unfortunate friend the knowledge that his cherished secret was discovered, I hastily committed the tell-tale paper to the flames, and, in the solitude of my own apartment, have passed the hours till long after midnight in revolving the incidents of this eventful evening, and in detailing them to you. Adieu.

A. W.

September 24, 18--.

FOR the last few days the spirits of Delamere have been gradually improving, or, rather as I suspect, he seeks, by an assumed cheerfulness, to impose on those that look no further than exterior appearances. He now rides out every morning with Lady G. and is frequently the companion of my rural rambles. To day we

paid our promised visit to Marguerite, who received us with the modest blush of surprise and pleasure, and presented us with her youngest child, a fine healthy boy, of a month old. Delamere thanked her for the interest she had taken in his fate, and forced upon her acceptance a present for the infant, whom he requested, if he was not already named, she would call Augustus, after himself, adding "That if he should not return again to Switzerland, he would leave such a token of his good intentions towards his little namesake, as would not fail to ensure the remembrance of them both."

Marguerite blessed him with tears, while she assured him, "That as soon as her boy was able to speak, she would teach him to lisp the name of Mr. Delamere, and to pray to God for him. And you know, Monsieur," said she, "God will hear our prayers for them that have done us good." Delamere sighed with the bitterness of an oppressed heart, and

believing the expression of Marguerite's gratitude was too much for his weak spirits, I hurried away from the cottage.

It was one of those lovely afternoons so frequent in a fine autumn, which are more easily felt than described, from that inexpressible feeling of softness and serenity which they diffuse over the mind ; and as we returned, I pointed out to Delamere's observation the additional beauty the landscape had acquired from the variety and richness of its autumnal hues.

"The season of autumn," said Delamere, "has always been a favourite one with the poets, in all ages and countries. Your admired Thompson is said to have been at that time under the peculiar inspiration of the muses ; and what lover of poetry is not acquainted with the description of the Abbé Delille, the author of "*Les Georgiques Françaises*?"

"Si des beaux jours naissans on chérit les prémices,
Les beaux jours expirans ont aussi leurs délices.
Dans l'automne ces bois, ces soleils pâlisans,
Interessent nôtre âme, en attristant nos sens."

An admired poet likewise of our own country, in a well known and popular production, speaks of "A Grecian autumn's gentle eve."

"I think, Mr. Delamere," I replied, "that the writer you last mentioned particularly excels in his delineations of night-scenery above any other; though all his descriptions are indicative of exquisite talent, and betray a nice observation of Nature in all her various forms. To pass by many others equally deserving of admiration, what can surpass the pathos and expression of the following:—

" 'Tis night when meditation bids us feel

We once have lov'd, tho' love be at an end,

The heart, lonè mourner of its baffled zeal,

Tho' friendless now, will dream it had a friend.

Who with the weight of years would wish to bend

When youth itself survives young Love and Joy?

Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,

Death hath but little left him to destroy.

Ah! happy years, once more who would not be a boy!

While I repeated these lines, I read in

the countenance of Delamere a corroboration of the poet's sentiments, and after I had ceased speaking, he remained for some time buried in a profound reverie, from which he at length started abruptly, as he enquired with apparent emotion, "Whether I had any particular motive in addressing this quotation to him."

"Certainly not," I answered, a little surprised at the suddenness of the question, "except the pleasure he might receive by an allusion to a favourite author."

"You are not aware how fatally applicable they are to my present situation."

"It was not possible I should be, Mr. Delamere, ignorant as I am of every incident connected with it. I see you are unhappy, and lament for, though unacquainted with, the cause; but I never either directly or otherwise solicited your confidence, nor obtruded on the sacredness of an evidently concealed sorrow."

"Oh, I know," exclaimed Delamere,

“that you are all that is kind, considerate, and delicate. When the peculiarity of my situation would have awakened suspicion in less generous minds, yourself and Lady G. beheld in me only an object who required your kindness, and what that kindness was I need not now recapitulate. Often, I fear, must my manners, too much influenced by a distempered mind, have led you to think me insensible, if not ungrateful; yet if such has been your belief, I conjure you to renounce it now, and if ever you should bestow a recollection on Delamere, impute his wanderings to their real cause, the selfish and absorbing reveries of a broken heart.”

I was too much affected to reply, and turned aside my head to conceal the tears I could not refrain from shedding.

Delamere continued: “In a moment when her cares had conferred upon me a new existence, Alicia (for so she then termed herself) deigned to promise me

her friendship. Will she confirm that assurance now?"

"Most readily," I replied, extending my hand to Delamere, who raised it respectfully to his lips.

"I receive gratefully," he resumed, "this token of your generous confidence; yet I must warn you, my amiable friend, that an ordeal awaits you which will shake every sentiment of friendship for me even to its foundation; for such an ordeal is that tale to which you must listen, and which would, ere this, have been revealed, but that my mind, weakened by indisposition, shrunk from the recollections it demands, as they must again tear open those wounds to which the hand of time has, in some measure, applied a styptic, though to heal them is beyond his power."

"Why, then, should they be re-opened," I exclaimed, "by such a communication? It is sufficient that you have been unfortunate, without subjecting

yourself to new pangs, by the gratification of an unprofitable curiosity."

"Because," replied Delamere, "you may hereafter hear from others a detail which I wish should first proceed from my own lips: not that I would seek to extenuate any part of my conduct that I know you must condemn, by thus being my own narrator. I must relate to you a tale of fatal errors, blighted prospects, disappointed affections. Of talents perverted, and the fairest advantages misapplied and abused; but I wish to relate it without any additional embellishment from the exaggerations of calumny or the malignancy of envy; so, that though you may detest his errors, you may feel some degree of compassion for the young misguided victim of an infatuation almost without parallel."

While Delamere spoke thus, I felt my heart beat at the coincidence which existed between his words, and my late

confirmed surmises ; but I maintained silence and he continued :—

“ It is useless to conceal from you any longer that my present character is assumed, by which I would only intimate, that when I became an exile from my native country, I relinquished the name I bore, and the rank I once held in society. Here, unknown and unconnected, I believed the sound of what I formerly was, would never more have reached my ears ; but even this solitude has not sheltered me from the attacks of malignity, and my emotion at the perusal of that accursed paragraph has perhaps revealed to you that the wretched infatuated Harold is your friend Delamere.”

“ My suspicions were then right,” I involuntarily exclaimed, “ for pardon me, my lord, but such a conjecture did enter my mind ; though it was never breathed to any ear ; not even to her’s who shares every sentiment of my heart, my incomparable friend, Lady G.”

“ I believe you,” replied Delamere, fervently : “ but, my sweet friend, let me beg of you to drop that empty title you have just used ; I would willingly have some pleasing recollections attached to the name of Delamere—that of Harold is fraught only with misery and horror.”

I promised compliance with this request, and as we entered the garden, Delamere, as I must still call him, took my hand, saying—“ To-morrow, Alicia, if you will permit that appellation, I will endeavour to perform the promise I have now given you, and confide to your kind and friendly bosom the narrative of my unhappy life. That spot, he continued, pointing to a lovely and solitary glen by the lake side, shall be the scene of our evening walk ; and, as the declining sun presents to my imagination a striking though mournful emblem of my own fate, I will reveal, without disguise, my feelings, my sufferings, and my faults.”

“ But, Lady G.,” I faintly articulated.

“ I will leave to you the task of becoming the historian of your friend ; for though I confess it to be a weakness which prompts this request, so great is the reverence I feel for the *pure and exalted virtues* of Lady G., that I could not encounter the glance of her penetrating eye, when detailing incidents which must I know degrade me in her opinion. From you I expect greater allowances for my errors, and rely on your goodness to soften those circumstances which you cannot but condemn.”

I endeavoured to convince Delamere that he had nothing to apprehend from the rigid judgment of Lady G., who was, I assured him, every thing that is tender, candid, and compassionate ; but his resolution was not to be shaken ; and, fearful of being altogether denied his confidence, I forbore to press the subject any further, and we parted with a mutual promise of punctuality to our engagement to-morrow evening.

To-morrow, then, my sister, will place in my possession a recital I long, yet dread to have revealed, since it must throw over the splendid talents and amiable qualities of the interesting narrator, the odium of perversion and the shade of vice. Yet I shall derive one advantage from the detail—a stronger conviction of the uselessness of the most brilliant endowments, and the comparative little value even of estimable dispositions, when unsupported by just conduct, and firm and virtuous principles. In the first case, they may dazzle, they may allure—but contempt, or at most, compassion, will be their unfailing attendants. In the latter, the delight they confer will be combined with esteem; and, while they enhance the rational enjoyments of this life, they will, in their application to the purposes of piety and virtue, ensure to their possessor the more exalted and enduring pleasures of a better.

A. W.

Oct. 30, 18--.

Read the inclosed, my sister, and weep with me over the lamentable detail, in which the sons and daughters of genius may behold a beacon against those dangers by which they are, in a more peculiar manner, environed. And as you peruse this melancholy evidence of the perils attendant on superior talents, like me, methinks you will exclaim—

“ Oh ! what a noble mind was here o’erthrown ! ”

Noble indeed it was, in its natural faculties, in its brilliant endowments. Highly embellished by every species of cultivation which education could bestow, but destitute of that support to be derived only from vigorous principles early inculcated, and the habitual influence of a rational and manly piety, it became the slave of imagination, the votary of folly, the victim of vice.

The whole life of Harold appears to have been a perpetual struggle between strong passions and unstable principles—

and what is the result? Broken in heart, blighted in expectation, with a fortune greatly impaired, and feelings exhausted by their own violence—his health injured, and all the fine powers of his mind depressed and blasted, he now stands an affecting *memento* of the fallacy of high intellectual endowments, when unconnected with virtue—a human wreck of every thing which is lovely, brilliant, and estimated in man. Deprived of all the ties of social and domestic life, the world is to him a solitude; and the accidental comforts which he may derive from a transitory intercourse with strangers, pass away with the objects who gave rise to them, and leave but a faint impression behind.

But I will no longer, by these remarks, detain you from my promised narrative; which I must detail to you in my own words; for it is not in my power to convey any adequate idea of the language in which Lord Harold related the history of

his eventful life. Like rainbow tints, his “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,” fade from the insensible surface of my dull imagination, and only leave a general and indistinct remembrance upon the mind. Much as I regret the loss you will sustain by this recapitulation of his tale, the deficiency will, I trust, be overlooked, in consideration of the motive which prompts an attempt to which I acknowledge myself so little adequate ;—the wish of communicating to you those events that have so deeply interested the feelings of your sister, in behalf of the unfortunate hero of the inclosed narrative.—While I now write, I see him in his “customary suit of solemn black,” pacing along the garden beneath my window ; sometimes gazing with fixed eye on the surrounding landscape ; at others, unconsciously plucking away the leaves of the last pale rose, which lingers on the chill brow of autumn ; an emblem, in its blighted beauty and departed fragrance,

of him who now seems to moralize over it. What a contrast does he present to the being who must soon be depicted to your imagination, in all the pride of birth, of nature, and of talent. Animated with the lovely feelings of unvitiated youth, fraught with the tenderest susceptibility of heart—the noblest energies of mind. Such Harold once was.—Now— Surely, my sister, in reading this, you will be ready to exclaim with the poet—

“ Where are thy friends,
The dear companions of thy joyful days ;
Whose hearts thy warm prosperity made glad,
Whose arms were taught to grow like ivy round thee,
And bind thee to their bosoms.

Now where are they ?”

ROWE.

M E M O I R S

OF

HAROLD THE EXILE.

CHAP. I.

IN the beautiful vale of Towy, in Caermarthenshire, stood the venerable mansion of the family of Harold, from which the hero of this narrative was descended. He lost his father very early in life, and his mother, who had no other child, beheld in him the dearest idol of her affections, and the sole object of her maternal care. Though a woman of amiable character, and irreproachable

conduct, Lady Harold possessed no great strength of mind—a fatal circumstance to the young Augustus, whose opening dispositions and early talents required the steady, yet tender guidance of a judicious and affectionate monitor, to restrain the strengthening passion, and prune the too great exuberance of a warm imagination. But nature had not qualified her Ladyship for this important office ; and they to whose care the young Harold was afterwards consigned, but imperfectly discharged the part they had undertaken.

The anxiety a virtuous mother will always feel for the principles of a darling son, combined with that excessive fondness, which rendered her very unwilling that he should be removed from under her own eye, decidedly influenced Lady Harold in favour of a private education ; but her friends strenuously urged the superiority of public tuition, and the advantage of emulation, to the promising

talents of the young Augustus. Lady Harold was not convinced by these arguments, but, like many others, she relinquished an opinion she had not sufficient firmness to maintain against opposition, and Harold was accordingly placed in one of those large public seminaries, where the mind of the young pupil is in general plentifully stored with the seeds of learning, while those of morality and religion are but sparingly sown and slightly cultivated.

In this situation the ductile and susceptible mind of Harold received its first impressions, and while he hung, with rapt delight and eager attention, on the classic lore of Greece and Rome, his ardent imagination caught the inspiring spark from the hallowed fane of ancient genius, and sighed to emulate the perfection he admired. Even then he began to discover in his early habits and inclinations, the shades of that character which marked his riper years. The athletic

sports and puerile amusements of his juvenile companions soon lost their attractions, and Harold, like his young prototype, Edwin,

“ From the rude gambol far remote reclined,”

and thrown beneath the shade of some friendly tree, would pass whole afternoons in the perusal of a favorite author, or in indulging the secret reveries of his awakened imagination. The time he spent at home served to nurse these growing propensities, for the lovely spot which contained the mansion of his forefathers, was classic ground. To the glowing fancy of the young enthusiast, the vale of Towy was another Tempé, and “Gron-gar Hill,” the Mount Parnassus where he offered up his first invocations to the tuneful Nine. Here was his favorite haunt, and with a volume of Virgil in his pocket, and a thousand poetic images floating in his imagination, Harold might frequently have applied to himself the ex-

quisite description of the Bard of Gron-
gar—

“So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sat upon a flowery bed,
With my hand beneath my head,
While rov'd my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
Till Contemplation had her fill.”

DYER.

From every friend that knew him, Lady Harold heard the praises of her son's extraordinary genius, and consequently took for granted all that was said to her on the subject. Of the fact itself she was no judge; for Nature had denied her a taste for poetical composition, and she would, with the same emotion, have listened to Harold's recital of the finest passages from the classics, or a production of his own juvenile muse. With the first she was unacquainted, of the latter she was unable to form a due

estimation. Her vanity, however, as well as her maternal fondness, was gratified by the encomiums bestowed upon this darling son, and she felt delighted in regarding him as something superior, though she could not exactly discern in what his superiority consisted. She would sometimes, indeed, enquire of the partial friends abovementioned, "Whether the attainments so highly boasted of were likely to make the boy more pious and virtuous, a better member of society, or more generally useful to mankind, than the less shining talents, but solid virtues, of his departed father, who had presented in his life an example of unaffected goodness, in a conscientious discharge of his several duties, and had died the death of a Christian; and I cannot but think," she added, "that, whatever other acquirements Augustus may possess, but little pains have been taken to make him the latter."

In answer to this, Lady Harold was

assured "that her son's rare abilities were calculated to ensure universal admiration, and that the objections she had urged against the paucity of his religious instruction weighed but little in comparison with his future figure in the world, and would be obviated by his own reflections on the subject, when he came to riper years."

"But why not inculcate those principles now?" enquired the anxious mother.

"Because, my dear madam, it will be time enough when we have acquired a competent knowledge of things more necessary to his establishment in life.—Were he intended for the church, the case, indeed, would be different; but a young nobleman has surely no occasion for a species of learning which will only cramp his genius, and be attended with no evident advantage."

Lady Harold did not feel satisfied by this kind of reasoning. She was herself unaffectedly pious, without bigotry or

enthusiasm ; and the importance of religious sentiments to the future conduct and principles of her son, was deeply impressed upon her mind ; but she shrunk from the idea of opposition to those on whose judgment she was accustomed implicitly to rely, and Harold was left, unassisted, to form his own opinions on a subject which was not deemed by his instructors of sufficient importance to become a part of liberal education. Fatal negligence ! which deprives the young debutant on the great theatre of life, of the best safeguard of virtue, the highest enhancer of prosperity, the only sure solace in affliction, and bounding his views to this transitory state of being, leaves the present without comfort, and the future without hope.

Soon after he had completed his nineteenth year, Lord Harold was removed to Oxford, where he continued to make daily improvements in knowledge, and in those personal graces which Nature

had so profusely lavished upon him. Of his progress in morals and religion, we leave them to judge, who, like him, have been transplanted from the peaceful shades of domestic privacy, to scenes where vice is generated by the contagion of example, and dissipation invites deception to aid those practices it dares not openly pursue, and where, like him, too, the delusions of a heated imagination, and a mind unfortified by previous discipline, expose the youthful inmate of these abodes of learning and of danger, to peculiar perils, and unavoidable temptations. It is true Harold had not as yet been guilty of any flagrant violation of the laws either of piety or virtue. He neither gamed nor intrigued, ran no horses at Newmarket, nor drove his curricule, with a dashing *fille de joye* for a companion. From the first, he was preserved by those feelings of filial affection which would have been shocked at distressing his fond and indulgent mother,

and the delicacy of his sentiments on the subject of love, joined to a laudable degree of pride, had hitherto proved his security against any unworthy inclination. Happy had it been for Harold if, at this period of his existence, he had found a friend whose example would have confirmed and strengthened his fluctuating principles — whose counsels would have matured his yet unripened virtues—who possessed of judgment to discern, and delicacy to point out the errors of a friend, might have checked the effervescence of an uncontrolled imagination, and directed to their proper ends the noble energies of a superior mind ; but, alas ! the being who most possessed the confidence of the generous, unsuspecting Harold, was in every point the reverse of the above character, and, like the demon of ill, that deluded our first parents in the bowers of Eden, he only exerted the influence he had obtained over his inexperienced victim, to mislead and destroy.

Edward Berrington, who was a few years older than our hero, was the eldest son of a baronet, whose family was much superior to his fortune. His person was handsome, his manners specious and insinuating, and his abilities of the first order; but these natural endowments were shadowed by vicious principles and libertine conduct. Devoted solely to the gratification of his pleasures, every honourable and virtuous consideration were but too often sacrificed, in pursuit of this primary object of his existence, and, as his means of expenditure were limited, he was compelled to resort to many expedients to supply the deficiency. The gaming-table was a never-failing resource, and the inexperience, the weaknesses, and the vices of his young associates, were all made subservient to the same end. Quick in discerning the characters of others, and skilful in concealing his own; complacent by nature, and a flatterer from habit, he readily insinuated

himself into the favour of those whose confidence he desired to gain, and while he initiated the young and the unwary into scenes of dissipation and vice, he at the same time participated in pleasures, of which another defrayed the cost.

From his first introduction to Lord Harold, Berrington conceived him to be a fit object for the exercise of his nefarious arts, and eagerly sought his friendship and confidence ; but to obtain either was a task more difficult than he had at first believed. Harold possessed no inconsiderable share of pride, as well as that reserve, so frequently observable in those on whom Nature has conferred extraordinary mental endowments ; not the pride of birth, nor the still more contemptible pride which often accompanies a great superiority of fortune, but the proud consciousness of genius, the perception of feelings and faculties, which raise the possessor above the common race of mankind, and create for him a

world whose visionary enjoyments are elevated far above the cold and dull realities of life.

To a mind thus constituted, the attractions of society (in the general acceptance of the term) are very circumscribed, and in proportion to the pleasure it derives from an intercourse with a congenial spirit, is the wearisomeness and insipidity of the common-place sentiment and limited perceptions of those beings of whom the great mass of society is chiefly composed. Their petty cares, and paltry contentions, excite only surprise, or, at most, indifference in him, whose enlarged and cultivated mind embraces the vast boundaries of nature and of passion ; and the man of genius who is uncontaminated by the seductions of pleasure or the influence of vice, gladly turns from the bustling and giddy crowd to the solitude of his own heart, and the delightful, though narrow, circle

of domestic life. But to return to Lord Harold :—

Of retired habits, and possessing in himself sufficient resources of occupation and amusement, he had hitherto formed no intimacy beyond the common courtesies of society and good breeding ; and the frequent essays which were made by Berrington towards a more intimate acquaintance, were for some time returned only with cold politeness by Harold, who was almost vexed by the persevering, and often intrusive attentions of his fellow collegian. The latter, however, was not discouraged by the coolness with which his proffered friendship was received ; the confidence of Harold presented too many advantages to his imagination to be readily relinquished, and he determined to leave no means untried to overcome his reserve. With this resolve, he sought every opportunity of obtaining a closer knowledge of Harold's character,

and the result of this scrutiny was but too favourable to his designs. He judged rightly, that his naturally affectionate and susceptible disposition could not remain insensible to his endeavours to please, and to that appearance of regard which he took every occasion, both in public and private, to profess for him. He perceived, too, in Harold a tendency to melancholy, which might render his own powers of amusement an acquisition to the frequently drooping spirit of his less lively companion, who inherited that constitutional pensiveness which is so often the concomitant of genius, and which was in him much augmented by the usual tenor of his pursuits and studies, and the influence of that solitude he so greatly loved. All these peculiarities were observed by Berrington with secret complacency; and chance, as if favouring his wishes, produced an incident which conduced, in no small degree, towards their completion.

Lord Harold was attacked by a lingering illness, that, without endangering his existence, rendered him unequal to every exertion of the corporeal or intellectual powers, and depressed his spirits to an uncommon degree. It was now he felt the want of those endearing attentions which home and friends bestow, of those comforts which the presence and the assiduities of woman diffuse over the couch of sickness and of suffering, and in the solitude of his own apartment, unheeded by all his gay associates, he bitterly sighed for some one to share the cares of a mercenary attendant, and alleviate, by their attentions, the nervous irritation of his diseased mind. This assiduous friend and cheering companion he now found in Berrington, who, secluding himself from all other society, devoted his whole time to Harold; his hand administered the medicines of the youthful invalid, and the seducing charms of his conversation, always entertaining, and enlivened by bril-

liant flashes of wit and humorous anecdote, contributed even more than the prescriptions of his physician to renovate the health and spirits of our hero, by removing the weight that preyed so heavily on the latter. On a heart so susceptible as Harold's, such attentions could not be vainly bestowed ; a thousand times he accused himself of ingratitude, in not having been sooner sensible to the efforts of Berrington to obtain his confidence and friendship, and resolved, in future, to guard against what he now considered as highly reprehensible, an unsocial and misanthropic disposition.

The impressions which his mind had imbibed in the hours of sickness and despondency, were not effaced by returning health and cheerfulness. An intimacy commenced between Berrington and Lord Harold, which originated, on the one side, in the purest sentiments of gratitude and esteem, on the other, in selfish motives which at first prompted those at-

tentions whose result had been so favourable to his desire of obtaining the confidence of his unsuspecting companion. Much, however, still remained to be effected, before he could hope to derive those advantages from an intimate friendship with Lord Harold, which had been his sole inducement in seeking his acquaintance. It was necessary to initiate *him* into the mysteries of pleasure and profligacy, ere he could himself reap the fruits of his infamous instructions ; and as the innate delicacy of Harold's feelings would have been disgusted by vice in its grosser forms, it must be presented under the veil of sentiment, of refined and elegant pleasure ; of any thing, in short, which might excite the warm imagination, or interest the sensitive feelings of the romantic enthusiast. How far he succeeded in this design will be disclosed in the sequel ; but, at this period, his guardian angel, in the shape of Love, appeared to preserve Harold from his ma-

chinations ; but as we are now entering upon a new era in our hero's history, we will, with the reader's permission, defer its commencement to another chapter. If what has been already detailed appears tedious or uninteresting, they have now a fair opportunity of laying aside the volume. If, on the contrary, they should experience any degree of anxiety to be informed of his subsequent adventures, we shall request them to accompany us in our next.

CHAP. II.

SINCE his residence at Oxford, a regular correspondence had existed between Lady Harold and her son, which was a source of mutual pleasure to both parties ; for the latter, who had no concealments from this indulgent parent, made her affectionate bosom the repository of all his cares and proceedings, and her Ladyship

delighted to communicate to Harold every domestic incident which she thought likely to interest him. In one of her letters, a few months prior to his late illness, was the following passage :—

“ You will be surprised to hear, my dear son, that I have lately obtained a companion to supply your vacant place by my lonely hearth, and one, too, who will not, I am sure, excite a sensation of jealousy in your mind. You have frequently heard me speak of a Miss Leslie, who was the most intimate friend of my youth, and for whom I cherished an almost sisterly affection. Soon after my marriage, she went abroad, where she was shortly united to a gentleman of large fortune, who was then a resident at a foreign court in alliance with this country, where he held a high official situation. At the end of five years, she became a widow, with a lovely girl of three years old, who was her only child ; and, unable to tear herself from the spot which

contained the ashes of her beloved husband, she continued to reside on the continent, and devoted her whole attention to the education of the charming Gabrielle, for so she had named her daughter.— Though time and absence had, in some measure, abated the fervour of our early friendship, we still maintained a regular correspondence, and in her last moments she committed her daughter to my guardianship, with a solemn entreaty that I would extend to her orphan that friendship and affection which I had cherished for herself. Not to dwell upon particulars, the necessary arrangements were soon made, and, on her arrival in England, Miss Montgomery was placed under my protection, by the friends who had escorted her from Sicily, and is now an inmate of the castle. I shall not attempt, Harold, to describe my young companion, as I hope you will shortly see her yourself. Beautiful she indeed is, beyond my highest encomiums, and accomplished

as she is lovely ; but it requires some time to discover the varied perfections of Gabrielle Montgomery, since she takes as much pains to conceal them from observation, as many would testify in their display—but I may speak of the virtues of her heart, of the sweetness of her disposition, of the affection she shows me, and her unwearied endeavours to promote my happiness. In short, my dear son, the arrival of Miss Montgomery has considerably augmented my domestic comfort, and I eagerly anticipate the time when I shall introduce you to my lovely protégé.”

In every subsequent letter from Lady Harold, the fair Gabrielle was mentioned with the warmest encomiums. Harold thought his mother had never been so animated on any subject before, and half in love with a being of his own creation, he rejoiced when the long wished-for moment arrived which again recalled him to the shades of his native Wales. It was

that delicious season of the year, when the vivid freshness of spring still lingers on the bloom of summer, that Lord Harold once more beheld the mansion of his forefathers—its antique turrets illumined by the bright beams of a radiant sun-set. The birds sang their hymns to Evening from every grove, and all Nature seemed to harmonize with the present state of his feelings ; or rather, the latter had assumed their character from an hour and scene which never fail of exciting corresponding sensations in the bosom of sensibility and genius.

Never had the thoughts of home appeared so delightful to Harold as at this moment, fraught too as they were, with the recollection of his boyish pursuits and pleasures. In one spot he beheld a group of fantastic elms, where, in the fine afternoons of summer, he had so often sat under their shade, with a favorite author for his companion. A babbling brook, which ran by the road-side, recalled to his mind

many a moonlight ramble along its banks, and Grongar Hill, whose dark outline was scarcely discernible in the deepening twilight, revived again the emotions of that moment, when, yielding to the influence of an uncontrollable impulse, he poured forth the first inspirations of his infant muse. With these recollections was associated the image of its native bard, and with an involuntary enthusiasm he repeated—

“Silent nymph with curious eye,” &c. &c.

It was almost dark as Harold entered the park, and willing to give his mother the pleasure of an agreeable surprise, he alighted from the chaise, which he ordered the post-boy to drive slowly on, and took a foot-path across the grounds, which soon brought him to the castle. The door was opened by an old domestic, who, in the exuberance of his joy, was hastening to spread the news of his lord's arrival through the family, but was prevent-

ed by Harold, who enquired at the same time for his mother.

“Her ladyship is in the garden, my lord, with Miss Montgomery,” replied the old man.

“I will go to them, then,” exclaimed Harold ; and, without waiting an answer from Jasper, he directed his steps to the favorite retreat where Lady Harold generally passed some part of every evening during the summer season. The moon shone brightly in an unclouded sky, and the fragrance of the flowers through which he passed was inhaled with a peculiar sensation of pleasure by Harold, fatigued as he was by a long journey, which had been performed with an unusual degree of expedition.

As he approached the pavilion, the soft tones of a female voice, apparently engaged in reading, caught his ear ; and gliding cautiously beneath the umbrageous foliage, he presented himself before the entrance unobserved. It was thrown

open to admit the reviving freshness of the perfumed breeze, and the bright moonlight afforded him an uninterrupted view of the objects within. In the centre of the pavilion, under what might justly be termed a flowery canopy, sat his beloved and venerated mother; and beside her stood a form so fair, so ethereal in its appearance, that it rather seemed the bright creation of poetic fancy, than aught of mortal mould. The blushing wreaths that entwined the columns, drooped over her graceful figure, and as the breeze swept at intervals the slender sprays, their fragrant blossoms were intermingled with the ringlets of her luxuriant hair. A white and fleecy drapery faintly marked the outlines of her perfect form, and a transparent veil floated back upon her shoulders, and slightly shaded her seraphic countenance. Her hands were folded on her bosom, as if in devotion, and the blue and trembling light, which the moon-beams shed upon her figure, gave

it a shadowy appearance, that finely harmonized with the surrounding scene.

Lost in wonder and admiration, Lord Harold gazed on the beauteous vision, for as such he felt inclined to consider the object before him, and almost believed it one of the genii of those romantic tales which had so often fascinated his fancy ; for he was now at that happy period of life when the mind surrenders itself without resistance to the illusions of the imagination—those delicious illusions which are so soon destined to be destroyed by the cold and melancholy realities of succeeding years. The moonlight scene—the still and lonely hour, conspired with the form before him, to entrance his senses in a visionary spell, and he continued to gaze, fearful that a sigh might dissolve the fairy vision, when a slight rustling which he made among the boughs, attracting the observation of Lady Harold to the spot where he stood; she started up in alarm at beholding the figure of

a man, and was moving precipitately towards the door, when Harold rushed from his place of concealment, and presented himself before her !

The scene which ensued will be easily conceived by those who have been in a similar situation. As soon as the first emotions had subsided, Lady Harold approached her fair companion, who had retired to a distant part of the pavilion, and taking her hand, led her to her son, saying—

“ Harold, you have already heard of Miss Montgomery. I have taught her to expect in you a friend and brother, and she is prepared to cherish, for the son of her adopted parent, the warmest sentiments of fraternal affection.”

“ And will Miss Montgomery,” exclaimed Lord Harold, with one of his most fascinating smiles, “ confirm the kind assurance which is thus given me ?”

“ Most readily, my lord,” replied Gabrielle, extending her hand, while a blush

and a smile, the genuine offspring of candour and delicacy, accompanied the movement. "The son of my dear, dear Lady Harold, must ever claim from Gabrielle Montgomery a sister's kind regard."

Enchanted by the *naiveté* and innocent frankness of the lovely speaker, Harold raised the hand she gave him to his lips, involuntarily exclaiming—

"Good Heavens! What an angel!"

Gabrielle blushed still deeper; and hastily disengaging her hand, retired in confusion behind her friend.

"Harold," said her ladyship, after a moment's silence, "you have quite taken us by surprise. Tell me, what secret attraction allured your wandering footsteps to this spot?"

"The voice of a syren," he replied, glancing towards Gabrielle, who was unconsciously plucking off the leaves of a rose which she held in her hand.

"You know my evening custom," re-

turned Lady Harold, with an air of tender seriousness. "I have fixed my oratory in this spot, where the loveliness of nature, adorned as she here is, with flowers and fragrance, is peculiarly calculated to excite emotions of a devotional tendency, and Miss Montgomery has the kindness to share my orisons. Believe me, my dear Harold, they often arise for you."

The fine eyes of Gabrielle, which, till now, had been cast downward, were elevated towards Heaven, at these words, with an expression of piety and tenderness which imparted an almost celestial beauty to her charming countenance. Penetrated to the heart by her looks, and by his mother's language, Harold stood silent and affected, when he was recalled to recollection by a proposal from the latter to return to the house, and offering an arm to each, he slowly re-traced his way through the blooming wilderness which surrounded the pavilion. On arriving at

the castle, Gabrielle disappeared, as if to allow of uninterrupted conversation between Lady Harold and her son, after their long separation—a trait of delicacy which was not unnoticed by the latter; who, in answer to his mother's enquiry—"Of what he thought of Miss Montgomery," again repeated—"She is an angel!"

"She is, indeed," replied Lady Harold, smiling at the vehemence with which he spoke. "But the beauty of Gabrielle is her least perfection. It requires, as I before told you, some time to study her various endowments of mind and character: but, believe me, Harold," she added significantly, "it is a study which will amply repay the pains bestowed upon it."

"Miss Montgomery must have many suitors," remarked Harold, with an air of anxiety.

"Without doubt," answered his mother, laughing maliciously—"An heiress,

with thirty thousand pounds, and such a person as Miss Montgomery's, can never fail of attracting numberless suitors."

"And in that number," said Harold, mournfully, "there is, doubtless, one who is favored."

"Not that I know of," replied Lady Harold, "and Gabrielle has no concealments from me. But, to speak seriously, my dear son, the heart of Miss Montgomery is a prize which is not to be gained without some degree of exertion on his part who would secure it. Her situation places her above all mercenary views, and the object of her choice must possess some qualities congenial with her own. I am well convinced she will never unite her destiny to any man's in whose principles and conduct she has not an unlimited confidence."

Harold's countenance had gradually brightened from the moment his mother had expressed her belief of the affections of her ward being disengaged. His air

of anxiety and pensiveness disappeared, and his conversation became chearful and animated ; yet many a glance directed towards the door of the apartment, confessed a secret expectation of the entrance of some one whose presence he desired. Supper, however, was announced before Gabrielle again made her appearance. They found her waiting in the eating-room, where a simple, yet elegant repast, had been laid out under her immediate directions, and a profusion of flowers, which decorated the table, declared, by their tasteful arrangement, the hand which had placed them. The servants attended in their state liveries, and the old family harper, who sat in a recess of the apartment, struck up his liveliest strains at the entrance of Lady Harold and her son.—The former directed a look of surprise and pleased inquiry towards Gabrielle, who, with a blush, and a half whisper, exclaimed—

“ This is a gala night, my dearest Ma-

dam, which I thought you would like to commemorate."

The affectionate glance with which her ladyship regarded her, was accompanied by one of transported admiration from Harold ; who, as he removed the flowers which decorated his seat, kissed and placed them in his bosom. The action, and the look which graced it, covered the fair Gabrielle with blushes—but her confusion was only momentary, and soon recovering herself, she exclaimed, with vivacity—

"Examine your flowers, my lord, and I will give you their explanation."

"Do they then express any particular meaning, Miss Montgomery," enquired Lord Harold ?

"The language of flowers, my lord," replied Gabrielle, "has been acknowledged in all ages, as you well know ; but have the goodness to look at those I have chosen for you."

Harold untied the treasured bouquet—

and, as he displayed the different flowers which composed it, eagerly requested of Gabrielle her promised explanation.

“ In selecting these flowers,” she said, “ I had in view their reference to your lordship and ourselves. The laurel and the bay are pecuniary your own—since they have ever been dedicated to greatness and genius. The white blossoms of the jessamine and the lily of the valley, are emblematical of youth and innocence, as the scarlet ones of the geranium are, by their brilliancy, indicative of the joy your presence confers upon your friends. The heart’s-ease conveys a meaning in its name. The amaranth is expressive of our wishes for the duration of your fame and happiness ; and the violet is a tribute sacred to friendship.”

While Gabrielle was thus detailing the different significations a fanciful imagination had affixed to the flowers she held, the eyes of Harold ran over her lovely form with an expression of the

most impassioned admiration. — “ And who, Miss Montgomery,” he at length exclaimed, “ has taught you this charming and novel mode of conversing with your friends ?”

“ I acquired the first ideas of it,” she replied, “ when abroad, from an acquaintance, who had long been a resident in the East, and I have since been indebted to my own fancy for its improvement.”

“ The art was worthy of such a professor,” answered Harold, bowing to Gabrielle, “ for what more natural and consistent than for beauty to borrow a language from objects, whose loveliness can only be surpassed by her own !”

“ Methinks,” observed Lady Harold, “ there is one thing deficient in Gabrielle’s blooming offering.”

“ To what does your Ladyship allude ?”

“ The absence of her favorite flower.— Whence comes it, my dear,” addressing Miss Montgomery, “ that there are no roses in Harold’s bouquet ?”

Gabrielle was silent: and Lady Harold, who seemed to enjoy her evident confusion, continued—"Was it that you thought *il fiore d'amore*, a dangerous present for a young man, and therefore rejected it, out of a considerate regard for his future welfare—or, is the gift so precious in your estimation, that it must be won, ere it is conferred?"

The blush which mantled Gabrielle's fair cheek extended its suffusion to her bosom at these words; but her emotion was the offspring of delicacy, not bashfulness, and she quickly replied, with her wonted sportiveness, "The violet, my dear Madam, supplies the place of your regretted rose; it is less lovely, perhaps, but far more lasting than *il fiore d'amore*."

Harold had remained silent during this conversation between his mother and Miss Montgomery, but not a word had been lost upon him, and he involuntarily repeated to himself—"What loveliness! what imagination! How different is this

charming creature from all the women I have yet seen !” After the servants had retired, the conversation became less general ; and Miss Montgomery, who believed her presence might be a restraint on their free discussion of domestic affairs, soon left Harold and his mother to an uninterrupted enjoyment of each other’s society. After her departure, the former became silent and abstracted, soon began to complain of weariness from his journey, and, in fine, retired to rest, the most charmed and enamoured of mortals.

Whether he slept or not, this history does not say ; but his dreams, if he had any, presented to his imagination no form but that of Miss Montgomery.

CHAP. III.

HAROLD arose early, and descended into the garden to enjoy the freshness of one of the loveliest mornings the summer had

produced. After sauntering about for some time, he approached a spot which appeared, in a great measure, to be a new creation since his last residence at the castle. In the centre of a parterre of the freshest verdure, stood a small building of elegant construction, embowered by the luxuriant foliage of the shrubs which environed it. The pensile branches of the acacia were intermingled with the feathery larch, the liburnum, and the mountain ash. Roses and a variety of climbing plants entwined the gothic columns and windows of the building, the door of which was unclosed, and Harold entered a small apartment fitted up in a style of the most elegant simplicity; an Indian matting covered the floor, and the seats composed of the slender reeds of the bamboo-cane, were finished with a light drapery of pale green silk, which likewise shaded the windows, in whose recesses were Etruscan vases of marble exquisitely wrought, and filled with flowers. But

the attention of Lord Harold was soon called from the decorations of this retreat to its apparent appropriation. The tasteful book-cases that adorned the walls were furnished with the best authors in several languages. On one table were implements for drawing and writing, and on another lay a port-folio filled with specimens in every branch of the art, whose execution confessed a master's hand. A harp stood in a recess of the apartment, and on one of the seats was a lute, similar to those used by the peasant girls of Sicily. While Harold surveyed the objects before him with silent surprise and admiration, he suddenly beheld an old man at work in the flower garden which surrounded the building, who, on perceiving his approach, laid down his spade, and, with a profound bow, respectfully paid his morning salutation to the young lord of the Castle of Llanivar. To his inferiors Harold was ever courteous and affable, and he now entered freely

into conversation with old Morgan, of whom, after some previous questions, he inquired "by whose directions the recent alterations in this spot had been made?"

"By Miss Montgomery's, my lord," replied the old man. "She begged the ground of my lady, and had the whole done at her own expence, to find work for the old people in the village, who are almost past labour, to whom she gives better wages than they can get elsewhere."

"Is Miss Montgomery," asked Harold, "much liked in this neighbourhood?"

"Liked, my lord!" exclaimed Morgan with energy, "why there is not a creature within ten miles round, who would not go through fire and water to serve her by night or day. Oh, she is one of God Almighty's angels; whom he has sent on earth to do good to those about them."

"And what does Miss Montgomery do then, which deserves such enco-

miums ?” said Harold, much affected by the warmth of Morgan’s language.

“ Every thing, my lord, which is good and charitable ; she feeds the hungry, visits the sick and afflicted, and teaches the poor ignorant souls whom no one else cares for ; and all this she does and more too, not with ungracious looks and hard words, as I have seen some ladies, but smiling and chearfully, and making as light of it as if she was doing nothing at all.”

It was a subject on which Morgan could have conversed for ever, and as Lord Harold experienced a singular pleasure in hearing him talk, he encouraged his loquacity by inquiring, “ whether Miss Montgomery was fond of this spot ?”

“ Aye, and indeed she is, my lord,” replied Morgan. “ Why, she is often here at her books by the time it is light, for she beats our parson all to pieces at learning ; and some times she will come and

stand by me while I am at work, and she will say to me, 'Morgan, says she, you must not fatigue yourself with too much labour ; remember you are old, and not able to do as you used to do ;' and then, my lord, she will stoop to tie up the flowers herself, or gather some to give my lady, when she goes in to breakfast. 'Tis not more than half an hour since she was here, looking for all the world like one of the painted angels in the Castle, and singing like any mavis in a May morning."

"And where is she now gone?" eagerly asked Harold.

"To the village, my lord. This is one of the days when she visits the school, and hears the children repeat their prayers and lessons."

Harold stayed not to make further inquiries, but abruptly bidding old Morgan good morning, hastened in pursuit of the fair Gabrielle. He had not gone far when he perceived her at some distance, bounding over the dewy grass with the

light footstep of a wood-nymph. Nothing could be more simple than her morning dishabille, nothing ever appeared more becoming, and the roses in her cheek outblushed those which decorated her bosom. As Harold approached her, they assumed a still deeper dye, while she returned his morning salutation with modest and unaffected elegance.

“You are an early riser, Miss Montgomery,” said Harold, after a momentary silence.

“I endeavour to be so,” she replied, smiling, “since the hours of morning are those we may more peculiarly call our own. The usual cares and occupations of the day have not yet commenced, and the mind partakes, in some measure, the freshness of the hour. The morning is to the day what youth is to life, the season of activity and enjoyment.”

“To those,” said Harold, “who like Miss Montgomery improve their time to the noblest purposes, every hour is a

treasure, whose expenditure is repaid by the advantages it procures. I have," he continued, "this morning been an intruder in the sacred haunt of beauty and genius; but who could resist the temptation, when no barrier impeded the entrance of the curious stranger to that delightful retreat?

Gabrielle looked surprised, and Harold proceeded to inform her of his visit to her camerino, as he poetically termed it, and his subsequent conversation with old Morgan.

"He is a foolish old man, my lord," replied Gabrielle, blushing deeply; "who knows not what he says. What do I which any other person in my situation would not do likewise? In those who are surrounded, as I am, with every blessing, it would be worse than criminal to overlook such of their fellow creatures as have been less favoured by Providence."

From Miss Montgomery's manner,

Harold perceived that on a subject like this, flattery could only be regarded as insulting, he therefore adopted a wiser course, by requesting "she would sometimes allow him to be the participator of her benevolent plans. I have," he added, "been as yet shamefully negligent on these points ; but if you, my amiable Miss Montgomery, will deign to become my teacher, I will venture to predict some improvement under your instructions."

Gabrielle readily promised a compliance with this request, and the conversation turned upon the beauties and amusements of the country ; on which she expatiated with the simplicity of nature and the enthusiasm of genuine taste. From this subject to that of literature the transition was easy and unaffected.

"I do not ask you, Miss Montgomery," said Harold, "if you are fond of reading ; the observations of this morning have rendered it unnecessary ; and there is to

me something very commonplace in a question so often addressed to one by persons utterly incapable of appreciating, or even relishing authors with whom one is thus compelled, as it were, to acknowledge an acquaintance."

"Your observation, my lord," replied Gabrielle, "is very just; and I have often, in mixed society, been forcibly struck and amused by the contrariety of opinion expressed on the subject of any new or popular production. One person perhaps will dwell only on its acknowledged beauties; a second, to impress his auditors with a high idea of the nicety of his critical acumen delights solely in pointing out defects; while a third will detail some unhappy error, some scandalous anecdote of the author, to serve as a foil to that excellence which none can totally deny, but whose brilliancy, like the sun's, blinds, where it fails to irradiate, and creates in weaker faculties an uneasy desire to darken the lustre

which overpowers them. In short, my lord," continued Gabrielle, "not to tire you by any farther remarks, these and similar observations have rendered me very averse to what is usually termed literary conversation, and I never introduce the subject except to those with whose opinions I am well acquainted, and whose feelings and sentiments are congenial to my own."

"Let me hope, however, my charming Miss Montgomery," exclaimed Lord Harold, "that a more intimate knowledge of mine, may entitle me to that delightful privilege. I do not ask so great an indulgence till you shall think me worthy of it."

"In making this request, my lord," replied Gabrielle, "you have, doubtless, in view my advantage rather than your own gratification, since in such an interchange of ideas, the benefit must be entirely on my side."

Simple as was this compliment, Harold

had never received one with so much pleasure, and he was in the midst of an eloquent acknowledgement, when they entered the breakfast-room, where Lady Harold was already waiting their return. With the frankness of childhood and the grace of the most refined breeding, Gabrielle affectionately kissed and presented her with her customary tribute of flowers. Harold thought his mother at this moment the most enviable of human beings ; but he was consoled by hearing Gabrielle tell her ladyship, that she had enjoyed a most delightful walk, and he was inclined to believe that this pleasure did not solely arise from the loveliness of the morning, or the beauty of the natural scenery around them.

The repast which followed such a ramble was rendered doubly delightful by its recollection ; and in the evening, the soft mellifluous tones of Gabrielle's voice, mingling with the dulcet sound of her

harp, completed her enchantment over the soul of Harold.

Soon after tea, Lady Harold requested her son and Miss Montgomery to accompany her in a walk. "I want, Augustus," said she, "to shew you the hermitage which has been constructed under my directions, since you were at Llanivar, and I think you will allow before we return, that it is capable of affording you as high a gratification, as any place you have yet visited." And the glance and smile of mutual intelligence, which was interchanged between her ladyship and Gabrielle, while she thus spoke, led Harold almost involuntarily to anticipate an agreeable surprise awaiting him at the termination of the projected ramble.

"What a delightful evening!" exclaimed Lady Harold, as they slowly proceeded through the park, "and yet, how many are there, who even now would prefer the suffocating atmosphere of a

London Drawing-room, lighted by argand lamps, and decorated with artificial garlands, to the pure breeze of these mountains, perfumed as it is by a thousand sweets, or the bright lustre of the moon, shining behind our ancient pines. Strange perversion of taste, which none of the present party are likely, I think, to adopt."

The closing day was no less lovely than its morning splendor, and the tender calm which evening shed over the face of Nature, communicated a corresponding feeling to the spirits of Gabrielle, who walked silent and thoughtful by the side of Harold ; but the regret he might otherwise have experienced at the deprivation of her conversation was counteracted by observing the additional beauty and interest her countenance and manners had acquired, from the soft languor of the one, and the pensive intelligence of the other.

They at length reached a ruined tower,

situated at the farthestmost extremity of the park, on a steep bank overhanging the Towy, whose clear waters foamed below at the distance of several hundred feet, over a ledge of broken rocks. A rude sort of seat, covered with moss, ran round one side of the building, and the opposite arch of a window, overshadowed with ivy, presented a bold and charming view of the river and valley beneath.

“This is my hermitage, Harold,” said his mother, as they seated themselves on the rustic couch; “I have performed my part of our engagement in bringing you here, and must now call on my fair friend to fulfil the remainder.”

Gabrielle smiled compliance, and, drawing out her harp from the recess where it had been purposely placed, ran over the chords with a light and tremulous hand. After a few preludes, as if to try the instrument, her touch became firmer, and she commenced a style of execution so brilliant and animated that

the senses of Lord Harold were entranced in rapture, while he listened to sounds which seemed scarcely the effect of mortal skill. Her singing confirmed the spell of the enchantress, as her clear and flexible voice glided through all the mazes of harmony, with an ease and rapidity which surprised while it delighted. Suddenly she changed her strain to one of tender sadness, and sang a few plaintive and simple Sicilian airs, in a style of sweetness and pathos which thrilled the hearts of her auditors.

The hour and scene, no less than the appearance of the lovely minstrel, conspired to increase the effect of her melody on Harold's soul. The moon had risen in cloudless beauty, and darting her long rays through the broken arches and crevices of the tower, shed a soft and shadowy light upon the objects within. A beam fell directly on the spot where Gabrielle sat, her graceful figure bending gently forward, and her white hands sil-

vered by the rays which glistened on her harp-strings. Her hat had been thrown off, and the light scarf which shaded her bosom falling around her in graceful folds, she appeared to the vivid and poetical fancy of Lord Harold like one of the forms that Ossian loves to describe. The lovely daughter of Toscar was not more beauteous in the eyes of Cora's bard, than Gabrielle now appeared to those of the enraptured Harold, whose evident emotion betrayed the nature of his feelings. The arm which sustained his head trembled beneath its burden, and the moon shining on his face sparkled in the tears which filled his dark and expressive eye. Gabrielle observed them, and striking a few lively chords, played a Neapolitan waltz, whose exhilarating strains dispelled the dream of imagination, which an excess of feeling had almost refined to pain. Lady Harold soon afterwards complained of chilliness, and the party returned to the house, where a cheerful repast con-

cluded the first day of Harold's return to his paternal home ; a day whose flight had been marked by the enjoyment of rational and elegant pleasure, and a gratification of the best and purest feelings.

CHAP. IV.

EVERY succeeding day, as it afforded a more intimate knowledge of the character and disposition of Gabrielle Montgomery, served to strengthen the impression she had at first made upon Harold's heart. In her he beheld realized all the ideas his romantic imagination had ever formed of feminine perfection, combined with graces and endowments such as he had not dared to expect united in the same person. She was exactly the being formed to attract the child of passion and of genius ; for, with a simplicity and playfulness of manner almost infantine, she possessed a mind, vigorous, cultivated,

and refined, and a versatility and strength of talent which created, in those that witnessed it, mingled emotions of astonishment and delight. No studied display of accomplishments, no attempt at artificial character lessened the effect of those talents, in the opinion of the attentive and judicious observer. In Gabrielle all was simple and consistent, and as her mind, like the violet, every day displayed fresh blossoms of intellect to the scrutinizing view of Harold, like that, too, it shunned observation, and bloomed beneath the veil of a delicate and retiring modesty. But once drawn forth from the shade its own humility had thrown around it, by the hand of one capable of discerning its hidden treasures, amply was the task of development repaid by the rich hoards which it possessed. Every successive event, as it called forth the display of new qualifications in Gabrielle, augmented the admiration of Lord Harold, who at one time beheld her

like the genius of domestic felicity, diffusing order and happiness through his mother's mansion, at another, enlivening with her talents the uniformity of private life, or transporting comfort to the abode of penury and the couch of pain.

While Harold believed her beyond any possible improvement, Gabrielle eagerly sought his participation in her studies, not with the intention of displaying what she already knew, but from an ardent desire of learning something more. How sweet these moments were to our hero, those will conceive, who, under the first impulse of awakened passion, have eagerly wooed the golden opportunities presented by such an interchange of thought and feeling, to create a favourable impression on the heart of a beloved object.

The timidity ever inseparable from an infant passion, when that passion is founded on pure and honourable motives, had hitherto restrained Harold from making any open avowal of his affection

to Miss Montgomery ; for he trembled lest his suit should be rejected, and that he should consequently experience a deprivation of that delicious intercourse of friendship with the object of his tenderness, which now formed the chief charm of his existence. But though silent on the subject which engrossed his every faculty, Harold derived a ray of hope from every instance of congeniality of feeling and sentiment which appeared to exist between himself and Gabrielle ; and he could not but remark that these instances became every day more frequent. If a striking and beautiful passage occurred in the perusal of any author, it was immediately communicated to each other, with the certain assurance of a reciprocity of taste. If a noble and affecting sentiment was uttered in conversation, the smile of intelligence, the quick and stolen glance of kindred feeling, confessed its mutual influence upon their hearts.

The same authors, the same melodies,

the same natural scenery delighted them both, and in some few instances, where foreign prejudices and customs had produced a slight difference of opinion on the part of Gabrielle, Harold perceived the gradual relinquishment of her own ideas and the adoption of his, with a secret perception of rapture in the testimony it afforded him of the growing influence he had obtained over her mind.

Of her real sentiments he was still ignorant, or rather the versatility of manner which Gabrielle had of late assumed towards him, was calculated to keep his spirits in that state of doubtful hope, which is the best enlivener of a growing passion. The melting glances of her expressive eyes betrayed at times a language which her lips dared not avow ; and the alternate playfulness and reserve of her behaviour left him in a continual anxiety as to the nature of her acknowledged regard. When in the presence of his mother, the formal appellation of “ my

lord," was frequently exchanged for the more endearing one of Harold, and her looks and language wore the unrestrained freedom of sisterly affection ; but, the instant they were again alone, the reverse of her manner returned, and the timid blush, the delicate and restrained air, the sensitive modesty which marked every look and action, drew, as it were, a magic spell around her, which even licentiousness itself had shrunk to violate.— Yet, while this conduct tantalized him, it failed not to invest Gabrielle with new charms in the eyes of the susceptible and fastidious Harold, and their souls were so intimately united in sentiment and feeling, their hearts seemed so sweetly to respond together, that he could not but believe they were destined by Heaven for each other—a belief in which Lady Harold (who was the sole confidant of her son's passion,) most fervently concurred.

Sweet is the task which love imposes on genius—to strew the path of a beloved

object with the fair, though fading flowers; of fancy ; and poor and empty is the applause of an admiring world, compared to that smile, so precious to an enamoured heart, where timidity and tenderness alike dispute their influence. This bliss Harold now tasted in its highest perfection ; and while his ear greedily devoured the praises bestowed by Gabrielle on his poetical effusions, his heart thrilled to the idea that their author was not altogether indifferent to her who inspired them.

Thus, “lapt in Elysium,” time flew rapidly away, and the period for his return to Oxford was fast approaching, without any declaration of his sentiments on the part of Harold. A thousand times the confession had trembled upon his lips, and as often been repressed by some latent apprehension, or by a well-timed interruption from Miss Montgomery, who seemed at once to anticipate, and shun the avowal of his attachment. Yet it would be unjust to accuse Gabrielle of

capriciousness or coquetry in this conduct, since it was founded on the purest motives. She had early formed a mental estimate of the character of him to whom she could be inclined to unite her destiny, and as this estimate was not an ideal creation of impossible perfections, she endeavoured to controul the influence of a growing affection for Harold, till she was enabled to judge how far his principles and conduct corresponded with the standard she had thus adopted, of the necessary requisites for matrimonial felicity.—“The husband of my choice,” thought the tender and sensible Gabrielle, “must be virtuous, or I cannot estimate him—religious, or I can have no confidence in him. If Harold is deficient in these points, however fascinated by his manners or delighted by his genius, I can never look forward to the enjoyment of any permanent happiness in a union with him.”

Should these sentiments be regarded

as unnatural, or at least improbable, in a girl of nineteen, let it be remembered that they had been early and assiduously impressed upon the mind of Gabrielle, to whom the language of her departed parent had been, not in the usual style of maternal exhortation—"Whatever you do, my dear, be sure you endeavour to get a good, alias a rich husband," but, "should you marry, my child, let piety, virtue, and good sense, be indispensable qualifications in the man you chuse. Without this basis for its foundation, the structure of domestic happiness will ever be liable to be overthrown by the sudden blasts of fortune, or sapped by the slow, but destructive influence of accident or temper. With them, no situation can be entirely destitute of comfort."—Such was the advice of Mrs. Montgomery to her daughter; and her unremitting endeavours to conform to every known wish of this beloved and lamented parent, was the motive which prompted the present

conduct of Gabrielle towards Lord Harold.

The moment fixed for his departure at length arrived ; and Harold, after an affectionate farewell of his mother, who mingled her blessings with her adieus, flew in search of Gabrielle, whose delicacy had led her to withdraw, that her presence might not be a restraint upon their parting interview. He found her, as he expected, in her favorite retreat, pensively seated upon a couch, the arm of which supported her drooping head, while the flowers that lay scattered at her feet seemed to have fallen unheeded from the hand which held them. At the entrance of Harold she started—a faint blush crossed her cheek, and the smile which hovered round her lip contrasted the liquid drops trembling in her eye, as he approached, and, in flattering accents, bade her farewell. The softness of her manner, the ill-suppressed tenderness of her looks, inspired Harold with a degree

of hope, and of presumption he had never yet ventured to indulge. The hand which trembled in his own, sought not to be released from his ardent pressure ; and the lace that shaded her bosom declared, by its frequent undulations, the throbbings of the heart beneath it.

“ Gabrielle,” murmured Harold, as he clasped the hand he held to his breast, “ say that you will not forget me.”

Gabrielle spoke not, but she turned her dark and melting eyes upon him, with an expression which tacitly told Harold their hearts understood each other.

“ You will think of me, Gabrielle,” he continued, “ during my absence. You will sometimes, perhaps, give a sigh to the memory of the blissful moments we have spent here together.”

Gabrielle withdrew her hand, and placed it before her eyes, as if to conceal the starting tears which dimmed their liquid lustre ; and when Harold, with gentle violence, attempted to remove it,

she would have endeavoured to hide her lovely face on the arm of the couch where she was sitting, but he prevented her intention, by suddenly enfolding her to his bosom, while a whispered confession of affection, mingled with the farewell, which, in the sweet delirium of awakened hope, he now ventured to imprint upon the coral lips of the struggling Gabrielle.

She attempted to look very angry, but the blush that mantled her charming face, and the half-suppressed smile which hovered on her lip, contradicted the indignant glances of her eyes.

Harold immediately released her from his arms, and falling at her feet, conjured her to forgive the rashness of which he had been guilty. Without replying, Gabrielle hastily disengaged the hand which he still retained in his own ; and, ere he could again address her, she had disappeared ; but the glance she gave him, as she departed, and the smile which accompanied it, a little abated the trem-

bling apprehensions of our hero, that he had, by his temerity, offended past forgiveness. A view of her receding figure, as she glided by the window, awakened him from his trance of doubt and alarm ; and he was flying in pursuit of her, to implore a pardon for an offence, which love had instigated, when his attention was arrested by the sight of a small morocco case upon the ground, which had, apparently, been dropped by Miss Montgomery, in her efforts to disengage herself from his embrace. An emotion, which originated in something more than curiosity, prompted him to examine it ; and unclosing the clasps, with trembling trepidation, he beheld a small but exquisite miniature likeness of Gabrielle herself, in the simple and picturesque habit of a Sicilian peasant—a few vine leaves fantastically twisted among the ringlets of her glossy hair, and the roses in her hand, less lovely than those which bloomed upon her cheek. The temptation was

too powerful to be resisted. The prize, thus unexpectedly obtained, was consigned to his bosom, and, with the image of the original in his heart, Harold commenced his journey back to Oxford, no more the free and happy being who had last quitted it, but the adoring lover of the most charming and amiable of women.

Ye sweet and animating recollections of a chaste and youthful passion, I bid ye farewell with regret! The time approaches, in which the roses of love will be intermingled with poisons, and the witching dreams of an impassioned imagination be embittered by tears of remorse and anguish. Short and transient were the raptures ye bestowed upon Harold, and the cup of bliss, which love had so deliciously tempered, is fated to be dashed from the lip that quaffed it, ere half its sweetness has been proved. The dregs of passion, and the bitter gall of a vain repentance, are all that now remain of the once delightful draught.

CHAP. V.

THE alteration which love had produced in our hero did not fail of attracting the observation of Berrington, who, with his usual penetration, imputed it to the real cause, and finally drew from Lord Harold a full confession of his affection for Miss Montgomery, with his present hopes and prospects. The information was by no means pleasing to his friend, who had frequently witnessed the effects of a virtuous attachment, in guarding the youthful heart from the allurements of vice; and he foresaw, in this newly-cherished passion, the destruction of those plans, which had led him to court the friendship of Harold. Reflection, however, by suggesting the probable diminution of his present affection, when possessed of its object, again revived his hopes, and, married or single, Harold was:

a prey which Berrington felt very unwilling to relinquish.

Harold, in the mean time, engrossed solely by the sentiment, which exercised a sweet and uncontrollable sway over his heart, no longer received any pleasure from his usual avocations. Society was insipid ; study failed to interest—even the muse, so often wooed, as his highest source of delight, was courted no more—since Gabrielle could not now bestow the tribute of her praises. She alone—

“ Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.”

His chief gratification was the communications he received from Llanivar Castle, generally penned by his mother ; but, whenever a fresh attack of rheumatism, or any domestic avocation, prevented the latter from writing herself, she deputed Miss Montgomery her amanuensis. For secret reasons, the good lady

continually gave some new excuse for making this arrangement, and a correspondence was thus established almost imperceptibly between Harold and Gabrielle, which served to enchain the heart of her lover by still firmer bonds. In the picture thus presented to him of her matchless mind—of sentiments equally delicate and just—of feelings which were founded in nature, and a refined cultivation of the intellectual powers, he beheld an assurance of his own happiness, since the being so singularly gifted was precisely the one most calculated to retain the affections, and ensure the felicity of the sensitive, romantic, and fastidious Harold, who required not only to be blessed in the tenderness, but charmed by the talents of the woman he married, and in Gabrielle, the lovely mistress, the affectionate wife, and the enchanting companion, would be equally combined.

In dreams like these, Harold wiled away the heavy hours of absence, sooth-

ed by the letters of Gabrielle, and, animated by the prospect of a final emancipation from a college life, which became every day more irksome, particularly since the departure of Berrington to his paternal abode, had deprived him of the relief afforded by his society and conversation. They still maintained an epistolary correspondence, and, as Lord Harold was to spend the ensuing winter in town with his mother, he looked forward to the probable event of their again meeting with no slight degree of satisfaction; so well had the artful attentions and seductive flatteries of Berrington succeeded in creating an interest for him in the breast of his unsuspecting friend.

The season so ardently wished for, at length arrived, and never had the roses of summer been half so lovely in the eyes of Harold as the frost and snow of a clear morning in the month of January, which beheld his curriole gaily bowling along the road to London, where his mother

and Miss Montgomery were already arrived. "What," exclaims the reader, "was Lady Harold so horridly old fashioned as to consider the month of January the commencement of a London winter?"

"Softly, gentle friend! Lady Harold was one of the old school, who compute the seasons, not by the new calendar of fashion and caprice, but by the natural order assigned them by Him who made summer and winter." All the arguments in the world would not have convinced her Ladyship that this immutable regulation was liable to alteration from the refined perceptions of those, who regard neither frost nor flowers as infallible criterions of the different seasons to which they are assigned by the erring judgment of unfashionable mortals. In pursuance of this outré mode of thinking, she had commenced her journey from Wales in the latter end of December, and as amusement, not dissipation, was

her ladyship's aim in this change of residence, she had, at present, found no reason to complain of the want of society or rational pleasure.

On entering the drawing-room, in Portman Square, the first person Harold beheld was Gabrielle Montgomery, looking more lovely and interesting than ever, while the soft blush, that tinged her face as he entered, rendered her still more charming in the eyes of Lord Harold, who, imputing it to the emotions his presence excited, read, in her confusion, an encouragement to his suit. These flattering hopes received a further confirmation from her subsequent behaviour, which, in a thousand nameless instances, evinced her growing partiality. Never was lover more happy than our hero, thus permitted to devote every hour to her he so fervently adored, to gaze with increasing raptures on the beautiful countenance where the expressive mind shone forth

from an eye now beaming with sentiment, now sparkling with intelligence.

“ And oh ! that eye was in itself a soul.”

To hang in thrilling extacy on the melting accents of a voice, whose syren tones might have discomposed a much more sober brain than that of the youthful and enthusiastic son of genius.

In public, as well as in private, Harold was ever by the side of Miss Montgomery, and report already nominated him the accepted lover of the fair heiress, of whom little was known, except that she was very rich, very handsome, and destined, by Lady Harold, for the wife of her son.

The conjecture received no refutation from her ladyship, whose silence was rather calculated to give an appearance of probability to the fact, and who, in reality, had resolved on the union of the young pair taking place, as soon as Gabrielle should be of age, the will of her

late mother having prohibited her marriage till that period. Little more than a year was now wanting of that time, and, as Harold likewise had not quite attained his majority, the good lady wisely concluded, that the lovers might as well allow a few months to the pleasant days of courtship ere they relinquished them for sober matrimonial felicity. Of the event itself, she never entertained a doubt, since every circumstance seemed united in its favour. With the ardent and increasing passion of her son she was well acquainted, and the delicate testimonies of her preference, which were bestowed on him by Miss Montgomery, left no doubt of her sentiments in his mother's mind. Of any unforeseen contingencies, defeating her present prospects, she never thought as possible. Happy effects of a sanguine disposition, which embitters not the fleeting pleasures of the present, by needless anticipations of future ill.

A short time after his arrival in town, Harold was one morning surprised by a visit from Berrington, in the uniform of an officer in the guards. As soon as the usual salutations had passed, he demanded the occasion of a transformation so unexpected, and was answered that a commission had been recently presented to him by a friend and relative of Sir Godfrey's, and that he was now come up to join his regiment.

"I should have written to you," added Berrington, "an account of this event before; but I knew I must shortly be in town, and preferred receiving your congratulations in person."

"They are yours most cordially," returned Harold, shaking him heartily by the hand, "not only on your own account, but mine likewise, in the prospect it holds out to me of your frequent society during my stay in London."

"Would to Heaven, my dear fellow,"

exclaimed Berrington, "I could persuade you to become one of us *gens de guerre*. You can't think how a red coat would become you. It gives such an air, such a *toute ensemble* to the whole figure, that it is absolutely irresistible"—and he stole a glance at his own handsome person in an opposite mirror while he spoke.

"I have no inclination for the profession of arms," replied Harold, "and had I ever so strong a one, the wishes of my mother would be an insuperable bar, since her consent would never be given to such a project."

"Say, also, the commands of your mistress," answered Berrington, laughing. "Faith, Harold, I am upon the tip-toe of expectation to behold this paragon. Prythee, tell me when I may have a sight of her?"

"My mother, and Miss Montgomery, are at present out," said Harold; "but I momentarily expect their return. If

you can favour me with your company a short time longer I will ensure you an introduction."

Berrington readily promised to stay till they returned, and, in about half an hour, a lively conversation between the young men was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Harold and her companion from their morning ride, to whom Berrington was presented by Harold, in a manner which could not fail of ensuring the kindest reception from a mother, who regarded him as the most beloved friend of her darling son. By Gabrielle he was received with her usual modest ease, and his visit was concluded by a pressing invitation from Lady Harold to dine with them the following day, which was willingly accepted by Berrington, who failed not, in this interview, to pay a close attention to Miss Montgomery, and, notwithstanding the large bonnet, which hid the contour of her charming countenance, and the wrapping carriage-cloak, which enveloped her

slender form, he discerned sufficient beauty and elegance to excuse the extravagant passion of his friend.

Soon after his departure, a letter was brought in for Miss Montgomery, by a servant, who informed her the bearer waited for an answer. She unfolded it with some degree of trepidation, and, after perusing a few lines, became agitated, her colour changed, and, bursting into tears, she handed the paper to Lady Harold, and hastily quitted the room. Harold looked, without speaking, at his mother, who read as follows :—

MY BELOVED NIECE,

(For by that title the unhappy Leslie may be allowed to address the child of his lamented sister) after an absence of twenty-five years in a foreign clime, I am returned to my native country, only to find the ties dissolved which once bound me to it, while those which I had since formed have been rudely torn asunder by the desolating hand of misfortune. Bro-

ken in heart, and shattered in constitution, I had anticipated, in the sisterly affection of my beloved Jessy, a solace for the few remaining years of my existence. I find her gone before me, and must now look towards her sweet offspring for consolation and comfort. If she is like her mother, my hopes will not be in vain, and the gifts which fortune has conferred upon me, will obtain some value in my eyes, when they are shared by Gabrielle Montgomery. The letters that your mother addressed to me, previous to her decease, and which (in consequence of their being returned from India after my departure for this country) have been only recently received, informed me of your present situation. Lady Harold was well known to me previous to my leaving England, and I sincerely rejoice in my sister's selection of such a guardian for her precious child, who will, I am confident, sometimes admit of her devoting a few hours to a solitary and querulous

old man, who requires her aid, to soothe the dreary moments of disease and ennui. To-morrow, at four o'clock, I will, with her permission, call in Portman Square, and, in the interim, believe me, my dear Gabrielle's affectionate uncle,

DONALD LESLIE.

P.S. Direct to Colonel Leslie, Harley Street.

"Good Heavens ! what an incident !" exclaimed Lady Harold, as she finished the Colonel's letter. "I remember Donald Leslie, a mad-cap boy of eighteen, just before he embarked for India ; but little expected ever to have seen him again. Gabrielle, my dear," she continued to Miss Montgomery, who had just re-entered the room, "what must we say to this new-found uncle of yours ?"

"Whatever you think proper, my dear madam," she replied ; "but every thing that is dutiful and affectionate, as to the beloved brother of the best and dearest of parents, who never mentioned him

without tears, and who, for the last few years of her existence, was led from his long silence to believe he was no more. But your ladyship must have the goodness to write for me ; for I am really too flurried to do it myself."

A few lines were accordingly penned to Colonel Leslie by Lady Harold congratulating him on his safe arrival in England, and thanking him for the honour of his intended visit, "which would," she added, "be anxiously expected by his neice, who, in mind, no less than in person, was the epitome of his lamented sister."

This letter being dispatched, the party retired to dress for dinner ; and the remainder of the day was passed in discussing the late unexpected event. But neither Gabrielle nor Lord Harold seemed quite so happy as they had been a few hours before. To the former, the occurrence of the morning had revived many recollections, which cast a damp

over her usual spirits ; and the latter, whose imagination was but too prone to melancholy impressions, anticipated an interruption to the felicity he had lately enjoyed, in the society of Gabrielle, and conjuring up a thousand gloomy images of opposition and restraint, fervently wished uncle Leslie in the Indian deserts, from whence he came.

CHAP. VI.

THE following day, at the hour appointed, Colonel Leslie was announced, and was immediately ushered into the drawing-room, preceded by a black servant, bearing several small packages, which, on a signal from his master, he placed upon a table, and retired. Though the colonel in his letter to Gabrielle, had styled himself an old man, he was not

yet more than five and forty ; but a long residence in a sultry climate, added to a slight stoop in his gait, gave him the appearance of being some years older ; his air was military, and his complexion confessed the influence of an eastern sun ; but his countenance was still handsome, and the expression of melancholy, as well as ill health, impressed upon it, could not fail of creating an interest in the susceptible beholder. With an agitation, he vainly endeavoured to suppress, he advanced towards his niece, but when Gabrielle prevented his approach by springing forward, and with the grace of a wood-nymph, knelt before him, while her soft voice murmured forth the name of uncle, his emotions could no longer be controlled, and snatching her to his arms, he called her his lovely Gabrielle, the darling child of his beloved sister, while he imprinted a thousand kisses on her coral lips ; which were remarked with no slight discomposure by Lord

Harold, who reluctantly complied with a whispered request from his mother, to accompany her to another apartment, as she did not wish by their presence, to lay any restraint on a moment so interesting to Colonel Leslie, as that which first gave to him a relation he had never till then beheld.

The constrained and dissatisfied air of Harold, did not fail of soon attracting her notice, and produced an inquiry of the cause: he attempted to laugh it off; but inadvertently betrayed himself shortly afterwards, by saying, "I suppose this colonel will soon deprive us of Miss Montgomery's society?"

"I apprehend," answered her ladyship maliciously, "that he will appropriate a large portion of it to himself, as indeed, he justly may: but, methinks Harold, you do not seem very well pleased with this new acquisition of Gabrielle's?"

"Dear mother," exclaimed Harold, colouring highly, "what makes you think

so? Though certainly," he added, after a moment's silence, "it is but too probable that the attractions of eastern splendor in Harley-street will considerably lessen those at Portman-square."

"If you are serious, Harold," answered his mother, "in this conjecture, I sincerely pity you. If not, I must consider you as highly unjust in thus imputing to Miss Montgomery, a conduct of which nothing but actual experience can ever make me believe her capable. That she will fulfil to the utmost every claim which Colonel Leslie has upon her duty and affection, I have no doubt; but, trust me, Harold, Gabrielle is a very different being from what I have hitherto thought her, if she can renounce for a newly acquired connection, the woman who loves her with maternal fondness, and the man she evidently prefers to every other."

Harold was too reasonable not to allow his mother's arguments their due weight

upon his mind. The little irritation of temper, occasioned by jealousy, gradually subsided, and he had regained his accustomed serenity, when a summons from Gabrielle recalled them to the drawing-room. They found her seated by her uncle ; her countenance bearing evident traces of recent tears ; yet, smiling affectionately upon him, as he displayed to her view the rich productions of India he had brought for her acceptance, and of which she silently appropriated the costliest and most valuable for her beloved Lady Harold. The latter was received by Colonel Leslie as an old and esteemed friend, and Lord Harold as one who for her sake was entitled to his regard and attention. With the most animated and graceful warmth, he expressed his sense of her ladyship's affection and goodness to his orphan niece, adding, " That though he could never cancel the obligation ; he hoped to have many opportunities of testifying how sensibly he felt

her kindness." Lady Harold delicately waved any further compliments on this subject, "by intreating the colonel to consider Miss Montgomery as much at home to him, in her house, as in his own, and the oftener," added she, "you will make it your abode, the better we shall be pleased."

The colonel bowed his thanks, and when he arose to take leave, "informed her ladyship, that he had taken the liberty of engaging his niece to spend the following day with him *en famille*, and if," he continued, "Lady Harold and his lordship will wave any further ceremony, and favour me with their company at dinner on Friday next, I shall esteem it particularly kind."

To refuse was impossible, even had a refusal been desirable ; and the colonel departed with a promise from Lady Harold, of being punctual to her engagement on the day appointed. "And what said your uncle to you, my dear Ga-

brielle?" inquired the latter, after he was gone.

"Every thing, dearest madam," she replied, "that was kind and affectionate. He spoke of my beloved mother in terms which made me weep, with mingled tenderness and regret; and has promised me a recital of his own history to-morrow, which, from some hints he inadvertently gave, is, I believe, very melancholy. Of his generosity, I need not speak; and though you know how little value I affix to things which merely serve the purposes of luxury, or ornament, they become precious to me as a tribute of his affection, and the means of expressing a small part of that tone and gratitude which my heart cherishes for my beloved friend."

And now with the most animated and graceful tenderness, Gabrielle offered to Lady Harold the presents she had selected for her acceptance; but all her intreaties could only prevail on the latter to take a very small portion of the intended gift;

and to this she consented merely from her desire of not mortifying her young friend by an absolute refusal. Finding her inflexible in her resolution, Gabrielle relinquished the point, and turning to Harold, playfully demanded his watch ; it was immediately presented to her, and having affixed to it a gold chain of exquisite beauty and workmanship, she returned it to him, with a blush and a smile, saying, " You must accept this Harold, under penalty of my high and mighty displeasure." And without waiting for his thanks, she ran out of the room, protesting that she should not be dressed for dinner if she did not make haste. Harold pressed to his lips the gift she had in some measure forced upon his acceptance ; which, valuable as it was, became more precious from the hand which gave it, and warned by her exclamation of the lateness of the hour withdrew to prepare for the reception of his friend.

Attired with her usual elegant simplicity, and glowing with even more than usual beauty, Gabrielle descended to the drawing-room, where a select party were assembled, who had been invited by Lady Harold, to meet the friend of her beloved son. They consisted of the venerable Earl of Temora, and his daughter, the fair Lady Emily Desmond, who looked lovely even by the side of Miss Montgomery, and who, just emerging from childhood, was equally admired for her beauty and the sweet and fascinating simplicity of her manners. A Mrs. Audley, who was distantly related to the deceased Lord Harold, and her two daughters, of whom the elder was esteemed a beauty, and considering herself connected with nobility, would have regarded the young and elegant Harold as a fair prey, had not her hopes been checked by the knowledge of his reported engagement to Miss Montgomery, which did not, however, prevent her from

endeavouring by every possible means to attract the notice of her noble cousin, as she familiarly styled Lord Harold to her intimate friends.

Her sister, Miss Ethelinda Audley, who was not particularly distinguished for her personal attractions, was determined on being conspicuous for something, and aimed at the reputation of a wit; but it was a subject too delicate for her apprehension, and her highest efforts never produced any thing superior to a rude jest, or an ill-natured satire, which was not unfrequently misplaced.

The rest of the party consisted of some college friends of Harold, and Berrington. The latter, who was accidentally placed by the side of Gabrielle, thought her the loveliest creature he had ever beheld, and all the arts of pleasing he possessed, were put in requisition to entertain his fair companion. As Berrington could, when he thought proper, be every thing that was elegant and

amusing, he did not fail by his conversation of making a favourable impression on the mind of Gabrielle, who secretly rejoiced in Harold's acquisition of so amiable a friend. The latter found himself seated by Lady Emily Desmond, and as Harold, though a lover, was never deficient in those polite attentions which are due to the sex in general, he did not sit a silent cypher by the side of his gentle neighbour, who, notwithstanding her extreme timidity, was readily led into conversation, and they were in the middle of an animated discussion on the last opera, when dinner was announced, and Harold gallantly offered his arm to Lady Emily, to lead her to the *salon à manger*. His mother had before taken the Earl of Temora's, and Berrington had the pleasure of escorting Miss Montgomery, and of being her neighbour at the dinner table.

When the ladies again returned to the drawing-room, the conversation assumed

the desultory style which is usual on such occasions ; and amusements, dress, and other fashionable topics were alternately descanted upon by the fair coterie, till each subject had been completely exhausted, and the party were gradually sinking into that awkward and embarrassing silence, so frequently experienced in a mixed society, when Miss Audley abruptly addressed Gabrielle, with,

“ Dear Miss Montgomery, I wonder how you can bear to live in this stupid England, after spending all your time in that dear delightful Sicily, where there are so many fêtes and *ridottos*, and such like charming things, of which we have no notion here ; that I am half wild to go there, ever since my brother George, who was with his regiment at Palermo, sent us an account of them. You must certainly have led a delicious life ? ”

“ I can speak but little of the amusements you allude to from my own ex-

perience,” replied Gabrielle, “as I seldom partook of them.”

“Dear me, how strange! And did you never go out?”

“Very often,” answered Gabrielle. “My dear mother’s society, though select, was extensive; but she did not approve of my frequently appearing in public.”

“Well, that was odd,” exclaimed her fair interrogator. “I should have supposed Mrs. Montgomery would have been desirous for you to display your accomplishments as much as possible, for accomplished you must be, since you have been in Italy. We have heard that you play divinely.”

“I understand music, certainly,” replied Gabrielle, heartily weary of her interrogations—but she was not yet to be released; for Miss Ethelinda, who had hitherto been silent, now took up the subject her sister had begun, by saying—
“And so, Miss Montgomery, your mo-

ther was not partial to the society of the cognoscenti, and amateurs in the fine arts. I always thought that it was fashionable in Italy to admire persons of that description."

"My mother, madam," answered Gabrielle, with dignity, "had an exquisite taste for every thing beautiful, both in nature and art; but she disliked the parade, as well as the affectation of it, and had too high a sense of what was due to her own rank in society, to admit the familiar acquaintance of professors; who, however entitled, by their genius, to admiration, were not formed by situation or education to be her intimates. But the case was, in her opinion, widely different, when talent was united to respectability and intelligence, or had been depressed by undeserved misfortune from the station it originally filled."

"With these sentiments," remarked Lady Harold, "your mother would not, I am sure, have approved of many inno-

vations upon old-fashioned opinions which have taken place since I was last a resident in town. What would she have thought of our high bred ladies holding public concerts at their own houses, and of which they are not ashamed to share the profits with some celebrated professor? or, of their vying with each other in the extravagant sums offered to a certain fair Signora, of well-known celebrity, to engage her services at their private parties, who, while she has believed herself conferring a favor on her hostess, has been known (I have heard) to demand the moderate sum of five hundred pounds, as a remuneration for *one* specimen of her vocal powers. In short, my dear Miss Audley, you cannot, I am sure, accuse this stupid England of a want of taste, since I know of no other country that pays so largely for the gratification of having its ears charmed ‘with concord of sweet sounds.’ Your boasted Italy does not come near to it in this particular.”

“Your ladyship is perfectly of my way of thinking,” said Mrs. Audley, who had been listening attentively to the preceding conversation, “and I say the same thing to my girls every day of their lives.—There’s that Signor Squallini, the singing master, has as much assurance, and gives himself as many airs as if he was their equal—and the other morning, when he went away, I saw him give Madelina such a squeeze by the hand, that I protest I could have shut the door in his face for his insolence ; though, to be sure, she was most to blame, for offering it to him. For my part, I wonder how girls of family can allow of these abominable liberties from such kind of people.”

“Lord, mamma !” exclaimed her eldest daughter, “people of fashion think nothing of these things ; and Signor Squallini is so fashionable, and so handsome, and sings so charmingly, that nobody, I am sure, could be offended at such a trifle.”

“Probably not,” replied Mrs. Audley ; “yet I am much mistaken if Miss Montgomery, who sings like an angel, would have permitted such a trifle, as you term it, in her master, who, perhaps, is as handsome and fashionable as your Signor Squallini.”

Miss Audley coloured with anger and vexation, and the spiteful toss of her head, as she glanced at Gabrielle, led the latter to expect some impertinence, which she endeavoured to evade, by hastily turning to Lady Emily Desmond, and asking her, “if she was fond of Ireland?”

“Very much so,” answered her ladyship. “We pass the greatest part of the year at Temora Castle, and I am never anxious to leave it.”

“I wonder,” said Miss Ethelinda, how your ladyship can like to be buried in a place, which is, I am told, in the wildest and most desolate part of the country, quite among savages, as the wild

Irish may be called. Indeed, I hate Ireland altogether—it is such an out of the way place, where the inhabitants have neither taste, nor fashion, nor elegance among them.”

“Indeed, Miss Ethelinda,” replied Lady Emily, a little hurt at this polite speech, “you must not venture to say so before my father. He calls it the land of the fair and the brave ; and says, that valour and genius are the indigenous productions of the soil.”

“Then you love Ireland for his opinion of it, my dear,” said Lady Harold, who was by no means pleased with the flippancy and rudeness of her young relation.

“And for its own sake also, my dear madam,” replied Lady Emily, with animation. “It is my native country, and the land where my forefathers lived and died. When I was quite a child my father used to point out their monuments, and tell me always to love the spot where they reposed, and where he too would,

one day, be laid beside them. I do love it," she continued, casting her tearful eyes upon the ground, "nor would I exchange for the sweetest climate in the world, the grey skies and majestic mountains of my native Temora." She ceased,—deeply blushing at her own energy of language; and Lady Harold, who already felt a great degree of interest for this charming girl, took an opportunity of privately intreating her to favour her, as often as possible, with her company, in Portman-square; an invitation which was gratefully accepted by Lady Emily, who was well acquainted with the high estimation in which her ladyship was held by the Earl of Temora, and was herself flattered by the attention she showed her, and charmed with the appearance and manners of Miss Montgomery.

The entrance of tea was soon followed by that of the gentlemen; and, after it was removed, the pressing intreaties of Lady Harold's guests were so generally

addressed to Gabrielle for a display of her musical skill, that she could not persist in a refusal, without incurring the charge of affectation ; and, accordingly permitted Harold to lead her to the harp, who, as he did so, whispered—" We will not expect the strains of the Hermitage at Llanivar, but any thing from you must amuse your friends."

With a glowing cheek, Gabrielle took her seat at the instrument, and played and sang, as she always did, delightfully ; but Harold, who hung on every note she uttered, with a lover's fond attention, remarked the difference of the strain where feeling refines on harmony, and which is breathed in scenes congenial to the sentiment it inspires ; and that which seeks only the applause of the many, and can acquire no imaginary charm from the illumined drawing-room, or a gay and brilliant assemblage of fashionable guests. But this was felt only by himself, and Gabrielle, as she arose from the instru-

ment, was assailed on every side by expressions of admiration, excited as much by the beauty as the vocal powers of the lovely harmonist. The seat she vacated was, after much entreaty, supplied by Lady Emily Desmond, who hesitated some time, from a conscious inferiority of her own musical acquirements, when compared with those of Miss Montgomery ; but her father, who divined the cause of this reluctance, encouraged the timid girl, by saying, " Come, come, Emily, make no more excuses. Your friends know you to be a young proficient, and will overlook all defects, in consideration of the motive which prompts the attempt—a desire to oblige those who have requested you to entertain them."

Lady Emily immediately seated herself; and, after playing a difficult rondo of Corri, with much taste and execution, sang, at the particular request of the Earl, Moore's beautiful Irish melody of " The harp that once through Tara's halls,"

with a sweetness and pathos, that could not fail of charming her auditors, and called forth a general intreaty, that she would favor them with another air. She chose the "Exile of Erin," which she gave with increased effect; and, even Harold, who believed that *one* voice contained in itself all the powers of harmony, could not withhold the praises due to Lady Emily's performance; who arose trembling and covered with blushes, yet secretly pleased that she had acquitted herself so well.

"Miss Montgomery," said the Earl of Temora, who was very fond of music, in general, and still fonder of his national melodies, "I wish you would oblige me, by studying some of my favorite airs. 'Tis romantic enough in an old man, you will say—but, when I am seated in the ancient hall of Temora Castle with Emily playing beside me, I am apt to fancy we resemble the Prince of Inismore and his daughter, as they are described by my

fair countrywoman, Miss Owenson, in her exquisite tale. Of this, at least I am certain, that my wild Irish girl is no less dear to me than the sweet Glorvina of the patriotic O'Melville"—and the look with which he regarded Lady Emily was an eloquent confirmation of the words he uttered.

"Believe me, my lord," replied Gabrielle, "I am as warm an admirer as yourself, of these fine old melodies, of which Lady Emily has just given us such charming specimens, and though born in the reputed land of harmony, and accustomed, from infancy, to none but Italian music, I early learnt to love the national airs of Ireland and Scotland; for, independent of their own intrinsic beauty, my mother was a native of the latter country, and the strains which had charmed her childhood, naturally became dear to her daughter. Time has only confirmed the impression they at first made, and I can never hear some of her

favourite airs, such as "Galla Shiels," "Auld Lang Syne," and a few others, without being touched even to tears, by the power of their simple and plaintive melody."

"For the same cause," returned the earl, "I am attached to our Irish music. The national strains I so much love, have charmed my forefathers ere I had being, and will, I doubt not, continue to charm our children when this generation shall have passed into 'the land where all things are forgotten.' But I am interrupting the pleasure of the party, and beg pardon for thus intruding upon them the remarks of an old fashioned admirer of past ages."

The music was again resumed by Miss Audley and her sister playing and singing several modern pieces and fashionable airs in the usual style; but the company, by degrees began to shew symptoms of weariness, and as Miss Montgomery and Lady Emily declined any further display

of their musical talents, cards were introduced for the remainder of the evening.

The party at length broke up, and Lady Harold and her little circle, when they assembled round the fire-side, as usual before they retired to rest, amused themselves by mutual observations on the events of the day, and the various characters they had encountered. The conversation in the drawing-room was repeated, by his mother, to Harold, who laughed at the absurdity and affectation of the Misses Audley, and joined in the admiration she expressed for the lovely and artless Lady Emily Desmond. When Lady Harold had quitted the room for a few moments, he informed Gabrielle that as she was engaged to spend the following day in Harley Street, and his mother was likewise to pay a long expected visit to Mrs. Audley, he had promised Berrington to dine with him at the mess.

“Are you at all acquainted with Mr. Berrington’s associates?” enquired Ga-

brielle, with an air of ill-suppressed anxiety. "I suppose, like most young men of their profession, they are very gay?"

Harold assured her that Berrington was the most sober and sedate young man in the world, and that his *friends*, he had no doubt, were of a similar description, "and to them only I shall be introduced," he added, with an arch smile which covered Gabrielle with blushes, as it intimated to her that he had penetrated the secret motive of her inquiry, which originated in a vague and undefinable feeling of uneasiness respecting this engagement, which she could by no means account for or explain. The return of Lady Harold, however, prevented any further conversation on the subject from either party, and they soon afterwards retired for the night.

CHAP. VII.

Colonel Leslie, to whom we have introduced our readers, was the only surviving brother of the late Mrs. Montgomery, and being obliged to “carve out his fortunes,” was sent, at an early age, to seek in another hemisphere, beneath the burning influence of an eastern sun, for that competence his destiny denied him at home. Possessing, in an eminent degree, the distinguishing characteristics of his countrymen, valour and prudence, the first procured for him the rank in his profession which he now held, and to the latter, combined with some extraordinary interpositions of fortune in his behalf, he was indebted for the possession of wealth sufficient to satisfy a man less moderate in his desires than the modest and unostentatious Leslie.

Already had he attained the meridian

of his life, a stranger to all those domestic ties, to which existence owes its chief charm; for not till then did he possess the power of consulting inclination only in his choice of the partner of his future days, and the mind of Leslie was too noble, too much under the influence of refined and exalted feelings, to be swayed solely by interested motives. It was, therefore, somewhat late in life when he married the orphan daughter of an officer, who had long been his most intimate friend, and whose charms and virtues were her chief portion.

Notwithstanding the disparity of their years, Colonel Leslie was the most beloved of husbands, and the happiest of men. The affection of his young and lovely wife was founded on esteem for his excellence, and gratitude for his generous conduct to herself. It did not, therefore, terminate with that blissful period of matrimonial existence commonly termed the honeymoon, an appellation trite indeed, but too

appropriate to the time in question, which too often exhausts all the sweets of wedded life, and leaves nothing for succeeding years but bitterness and regret. On the contrary, every year which was passed together by Colonel Leslie and his Maria served only to endear them to each other, and the birth of three lovely children formed another and a stronger tie in a union so perfect and tender as the one which subsisted between them. But all human felicity is as transient and uncertain as the beings who dream of it : and should it be asked why it is so? the answer is always at hand, that it is the will of Him whose ordinations are above the comprehension of our finite and limited capacities ; therefore, until, like Him, we can, at one glance, take in a survey of the past, the present and the future, in the scale of human events, let us not presumptuously question, but submit, in silent adoration, to his decrees.

Soon after the birth of her youngest child,

the health of Mrs. Leslie began to decline, and it was at length announced to the distracted husband, that nothing but an immediate change of climate presented a probability of prolonging her existence, whose life was more precious to him than his own. His two elder children were likewise arrived at that period when a removal was become absolutely necessary for the purposes of education ; but which had been hitherto delayed from the insuperable reluctance felt by both parents at the idea of consigning to the charge of strangers those dear pledges of a tender and happy union. The necessity of their mother's departure would now remove this objection, and as the urgency of the case admitted not of delay, Colonel Leslie, after a long and severe struggle with his feelings, resolved on his family's immediately embarking for Europe, whither he was himself to follow them, as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements in his affairs.

The reluctance testified by Mrs. Leslie to this plan was overruled by the representations of her anxious husband, who, trembling for her existence, was alike deaf to her remonstrances, and the suggestions of his own heart in favour of her stay. Her consent was at length obtained, a trusty escort provided, and this amiable and devoted pair parted, never to meet again. The ship was lost on her passage, and the ill-fated Maria and her lovely offspring were buried in the pitiless waves. To attempt a description of his feelings, who was thus destined to survive the wreck of every thing dear to him on earth, would be as painful as it is impossible ; yet he did survive it, and a temporary deprivation of reason rendered him for some time insensible to his sufferings. Alas ! it but too soon returned, to shew him the extent of the desolation by which he was surrounded. To remain in that spot which had once been the scene of his departed happiness

was insupportable to his tortured feelings. His mind, unhinged by recent calamity, was unequal to any future exertion, and he soon bade a final farewell to that country, where he had experienced the most blissful and agonizing moments of his existence.

Time succeeded, in some measure, in allaying the violence of Colonel Leslie's anguish, and he became tranquil, if not resigned :—

“The day drives on, tho' clouds shut out the sun,
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.

On arriving in England, his already wounded feelings received an additional shock, from the intelligence of his sister's death, and it was some time before they were sufficiently recovered to allow him to seek an interview with her orphan daughter, of which interview our readers already know the result. The resemblance of Gabrielle to her mother would alone have been sufficient to interest the

heart of the unhappy Leslie ; but united to the softness of her manners, and the apparent sensibility of her disposition, the effect was irresistible, and his worn and desponding spirits turned towards her as to his last source of earthly comfort and consolation.

The emotions testified by Gabrielle, while the colonel related his melancholy narrative, convinced him that his expectations would not be misplaced ; and as he kissed away the tears, that hung, like dew-drops, on the roses of her delicate cheek, he detailed to her the hopes and prospects of which she was now become the sole object ; while the assurances which Gabrielle gave him of her duty and affection, of her earnest wishes to alleviate the bitterness of his destiny, conveyed to the sad heart of Colonel Leslie the first sensation of pleasure it had long known.

Far differently had Harold been engaged, while his lovely mistress, like the

angel of pity, was pouring the balm of comfort into the bosom of her afflicted relative. He had dined with Berrington at his mess, and had been introduced by him to several young officers, who ranked among his intimate associates, and who, like himself, profligate and unprincipled, like him too, could assume a different character, when occasion required it. Harold had been pointed out to them by Berrington, as a sedate and bashful young man, whose rigid notions it would be good sport to vanquish, and whose fortune would afford an ample field for depredation, if they succeeded in their attempt. "But you must have patience, my lads," added he, "for I have had him in hand these two years, and thanks to the vigilance of the good lady, his mother, and the power of a pretty demure little girl, who is destined for his future wife, I have as yet made but a poor progress in modelling him into a fellow of ton and spirit."

In conformity to Berrington's instructions, the set to whom Harold was now introduced, assumed the appearance of strict decorum, and propriety in language and behaviour, and the gaiety of their manners and conversation, seasoned by delicate flattery, occasionally addressed to Lord Harold, on the subject of his acknowledged talents, while it charmed the latter, furthered the insidious designs of his companions, by disclosing to them the weak side of his own character. Of all species of vanity, that of genius is generally the least perceptible to its possessor, for it is so closely connected with that secret pride which is allied to the consciousness of superior talent, that the link by which they are united is too delicate for the precise limits to be easily defined. The modesty ever attendant on *real* talent, counteracted in Harold the baneful effects it frequently produces on minds less gifted with intellectual endowments, but he was young, and youth may

well be allowed to have a keener perception of that flattery which is seldom unwelcome to older and more experienced ears.

Every thing our hero observed in his new acquaintance was calculated to impress him with a favourable idea of their characters and conduct. Berrington made him remark, that they played low, and merely for amusement, and Harold was, without much difficulty, induced to join their party. It could not be thought, he considered as an infringement on his resolution of never playing but in a private circle, since the bets were too low to create any sensation of uneasiness in the losers. He was, as had been previously arranged, successful, and those feelings of distrust, which the anxiety of Gabrielle had at first excited, were lulled into complete security, by the events of the evening. Harold, on his return home, boasted to her, with an air of exultation, of the morality of Berrington's associates ; and from that period, he frequently made

one in their parties, both in public and private, where every thing still continued to be carried on in conformity to the plan laid down by their artful and designing leader, for the ruin of his unsuspecting friend.

CHAP. VIII.

IN the mean time, Berrington became a constant visitor in Portman-square, and each succeeding hour which he passed with Miss Montgomery augmented his desire of rivalling Harold in the possession of her affections. The passion thus suddenly conceived, was not excited by the virtues nor talents of Gabrielle, for which he had little relish ; neither was it founded on her beauty only, lovely as he really thought her ; the wishes of this profligate young man were chiefly directed

to the ample fortune of the fair heiress, which would enable him to pursue that career of expence and dissipation so congenial to his inclinations, and, which was greatly checked by his present circumscribed income. He saw, however, in the affection of Gabrielle for Lord Harold, an almost insurmountable barrier to his desires ; but Berrington was no less penetrating than artful, and in the pure virtue of Miss Montgomery, he believed he should be able to lay a foundation for the accomplishment of his nefarious designs. He was convinced, from her own assertions, that she would never unite herself to any man whose conduct and inclinations were decidedly inimical to her ideas of rectitude, and to shake Harold from the hold he now possessed in her affections, it would be requisite, he saw, to render him really unworthy of them, or at least, to persuade her that he was so ; a little management, he thought, might effect one, if not both of these

essential points, and Berrington had no delicacy of feeling, no scruples of conscience, to deter him from an attempt which he had long wished to accomplish, and to which he was now impelled by a stronger motive than the one that had before influenced him.

In pursuance of this plan, Berrington lost no opportunity of impressing the mind of Gabrielle with a high idea of the strictness and nicety of his own principles and conduct ; and when he believed her good opinion of his character was sufficiently confirmed, he began under the mask of friendship to both parties, to insinuate doubts of Harold's rectitude in the form of reports which had accidentally reached him ; and so artfully were these hints conveyed, so shadowed by expressions of apparent tenderness and regret, that not a suspicion ever entered the mind of Gabrielle, that he was, himself, the author of the reports he so assiduously repeated. Though destitute of

positive proofs, his insinuations had gradually the effect of weakening the confidence she had hitherto reposed in Harold's principles, and the necessity of concealment increased the anguish these newly cherished doubts inflicted; for on one side, wounded pride and disappointed tenderness, forbade their disclosure to the object towards whom they were directed; and on the other, she was withheld by a generous reluctance to injure Harold in the opinion of his mother, whose rigid virtue would, she knew, be greatly shocked by the reports which she understood were circulated of his conduct.

Thus circumstanced, Gabrielle had no participator in her secret uneasiness but Berrington, who treacherously availed himself of his newly acquired influence to strengthen the doubts already infused into her mind, and find fresh occasions of alienation between Gabrielle and her lover. With inexpressible joy, he perceived the success of his infamous scheme,

and nothing seemed required but to combine proof with assertion, to produce all the effect he desired ; nor was it long ere an opportunity presented itself for this purpose. The change which had been produced in Gabrielle's opinion of Lord Harold, insensibly communicated itself to her manners, and was expressed by a degree of reserve and coolness, which did not fail of being observed by Harold, who, unconscious of any reasonable cause, naturally imputed it to caprice, and under the influence of pride and resentment, carefully avoided an explanation, which would probably have defeated all the schemes now practising against them. These irritable feelings were artfully augmented by the insinuations of Berrington, who was his confidant on this occasion, and who, after loudly exclaiming against the caprices and inconstancy of the sex, added, with a laugh, " You see, my lord, your charmer is only a woman after all, and if she now finds she can torment

you with these feminine arts, you may promise yourself a rare life when you are tied together for good. Never whine and pine, my dear fellow, but manifest as much indifference as she shews to you, and depend on it, she will soon come round again."

Harold promised to be influenced by the advice of his friend, and equally anxious to shun a home which had now lost its principal charm, and to avoid the scrutiny of his mother, whose inquiries he dreaded, he spent a much larger portion of his time than formerly with Berrington and his gay companions, where the powers of mirth and raillery were combined, to overcome and ridicule his too apparent melancholy.

Almost imperceptibly he began to indulge in a greater freedom of manners than he had yet ventured upon. The exhilarating effects of the rosy goblet produced a temporary suspension of the despondency which oppressed his spirits,

and while under its influence he was sometimes betrayed into excesses from which his cooler reason revolted. Gaming he had ever detested, yet he now was frequently seduced into the loss of sums, which made him seriously uneasy in the recollection, and though his unabated affection to Gabrielle still preserved him from any avowed licentiousness, he suffered himself to be introduced to scenes and into society, from which he would a short time before have shrunk with disgust and horror.

The tranquillity of mind he had hitherto enjoyed was entirely flown, for he felt himself less deserving of Gabrielle's affection than he had once been, and the conviction embittered every moment of his existence. One symptom of returning tenderness, one expression of her former confidence would have burst asunder the fetters with which falsehood and treachery had enthralled him, but Berrington was careful to guard against

an eclaireissement, and used every means to foment dissention between the devoted pair, who, alike influenced by erroneous sentiments, furnished their deceitful enemy with arms against themselves. Every action of Harold was represented to Gabrielle under the most exaggerated colours, while his most venial errors were magnified into crimes ; and all this was conducted with such consummate art, that not even the shadow of unkindness could be attached to his base calumniator, who wept while he detailed his supposed faults, and reproached himself for permitting his anxiety for the welfare of the loveliest of her sex, (as he termed his unsuspecting victim,) to betray the confidence of his still dear, though misguided friend, who would yet, he hoped, be reformed by her charms and virtues.

In vain did Gabrielle endeavour to persuade herself that they might be deceived in Harold. “ Oh, no, it could not be, since the informer was his dearest

friend, who mingled his tears with her's, and who was, he assured her, unwearied in his endeavours to bring him to a sense of his errors." "And yet," she replied, "I should experience a melancholy satisfaction in having some positive demonstration of his guilt before I entirely condemn him." Berrington endeavoured to convince her that such proof could be productive only of useless pain. "However," he added, "if you really desire it, I will, (though reluctantly,) procure you the satisfaction you request. Ride with me into the park to-morrow, and you shall see who are Harold's associates."

With the desperate calmness of one who awaits the approach of an inevitable fate, Gabrielle beheld the arrival of the moment that was to confirm her fears, and, when at breakfast, on her purposely mentioning her intention to ride, Harold seemed on the point of offering to escort her, a faint hope of his having been ca-

luminated warmed her heart, but it quickly faded away, when, after a moment's conference with Berrington, he expressed his regret that a prior engagement deprived him of the pleasure of accompanying her, and hoped she would allow his friend the honor of supplying his place.

Gabrielle bowed a silent acquiescence, and hastily quitted the room to indulge in private those feelings she could no longer restrain. Ashamed, however, of her weakness, she soon wiped away her tears, and went to meet Berrington, at the hour appointed, with an apparent calmness: but her eyes betrayed her secret emotion, and the look of tender pity with which he regarded her, as she entered, nearly subdued her fortitude, and she could with difficulty repress the tears which were again on the point of falling, excited by this appearance of sympathy in her feelings.

As Gabrielle seemed but little disposed

to converse, Berrington did not attempt to interrupt her silence, and they had rode twice round the ring before an exclamation of "there he is" aroused her from the deep reverie into which she had fallen; and, on turning her eyes in the direction pointed out by her companion, she beheld Lord Harold walking at a little distance accompanied by several officers, and escorting two ladies, who were (as Berrington assured her) dashing females of a certain description, with whom his friend had recently formed an intimacy. His assertion was confirmed by the appearance and manners of the party in question, who talked loud, and laughed immoderately; and as the horror struck Gabrielle passed the spot where they were, she turned aside her head, and drew her veil still closer, to avoid being recognised by Harold. He, however, saw her, and with an air of the most perfect nonchalance bowed, and telling Berrington he was engaged to dine

at the mess, hastened after his companions.

Had a thunder-bolt shivered at her feet, Gabrielle had been less shocked than at this moment, and the look of anguish and consternation that she directed to Berrington, convinced him that his scheme had succeeded.

“ We will return home, Mr. Berrington, if you please,” she exclaimed, after a momentary silence, and affecting to speak calmly.

“ Certainly,” he replied, “ if you wish it”—and not another word was uttered by either till they arrived in Portman square ; when, as he assisted Gabrielle to alight, he perceived she trembled universally, and was obliged to lead or rather carry her up stairs into the drawing-room, where hastily placing her on a sofa, he would have gone in search of assistance, but was prevented by Gabrielle, who motioned for him not to leave her.

Berrington approached, and taking her passive hand exclaimed—

“ Good God ! Miss Montgomery, I fear you are very ill. Why did I suffer the scene of this morning to take place ? ”

“ Oh it is nothing, nothing at all,” faintly articulated Gabrielle as she attempted to rise, but her strength failed her, and she was obliged to lean on Berlington for support.

What was the extacy of the latter, on thus beholding the object of his secret passion encircled in his arms, her head resting with the confiding innocence of unsuspecting friendship on the treacherous bosom which was plotting against her peace. Often was he tempted to impress a kiss on her pale though lovely countenance, but he dared not yet venture so far, and contented himself with clasping the hand he held still closer in his own. In a few minutes Gabrielle revived, and withdrawing herself from his arms, apologized for her weakness with a blushing, tearful sweetness that would have melted any heart less callous than

Berrington's, who, engrossed only by his own plans, was insensible to the wretchedness he had occasioned.

On Gabrielle again reverting to the events of the morning, he inveighed against himself for having exposed her feelings to the shock they had sustained, artfully adding, "that he supposed she no longer doubted the truth of his assertions."

"Oh, would to Heaven, I could!" sighed the agonized Gabrielle, "but that is, alas, impossible. Yet, oh! Mr. Berrington, tell me not there is no hope. Harold is very young—he may have been misled by the force of bad example, and will still, perhaps, reform."

"I sincerely hope so," replied her wily confidant; "though the man must be far gone in the mazes of error, who could offer the woman, he professes to love, such an insult as you received from Harold to-day, by his bowing to you, in the presence of those women. But, do not

weep, sweetest Miss Montgomery," he continued, on perceiving the tears again forcing their way down her colourless cheek. "It is impossible but beauty and excellence, like yours, will, in time, have their due effect ; and all will yet be well ; only have patience, and forbear reproaches, which will but serve to exasperate, without producing conviction or amendment."

In this manner did Berrington infuse the poison of suspicion into the mind of Gabrielle, and beguile her with hopes which he did not mean should ever be realized. Should the reader ask, whether Lord Harold was deserving of her reproaches in this instance, time, we answer, will more fully explain the circumstance ; and, in the interim, we will leave Berrington to exult in the apparent progress of his schemes, for whose accomplishment he was violating every principle of honour, and every obligation of friendship and humanity.

CHAP. IX.

HAROLD did not return home till long after Gabrielle had retired to rest ; and when they met the next morning at breakfast, his pale and haggard countenance awakened an involuntary emotion of pity in the breast of his offended mistress, who, in an accent of greater tenderness than he had long been accustomed to, inquired if he was unwell. A glow of surprise and pleasure mantled his pale cheek, as he replied, in a faltering voice, “ that he was perfectly well, but fatigued by the late hours he had been obliged to keep the preceding night.”

“ And with such companions,” thought Gabrielle. “ Poor, lost Harold ! I cannot but lament over thy infatuation.”

“ For my part,” observed Lady Harold, (who for some time had suspected that all was not quite right between Ga-

brielle and her son,) “ I shall be truly glad when the return of summer again recalls us to the quiet seclusion of Llanivar Castle, where we shall once more enjoy our former domestic happiness, without interruption from the dissipations of this noisy, comfortless London.”

“ Never,” sighed Gabrielle to herself, “ will those blest days return. Llanivar will be as changed to me as he is, who once made it delightful.”

After his mother had quitted the breakfast-room, Harold still lingered, as if desirous of some conversation with Gabrielle ; and, at length, asked her rather abruptly, “ whether she intended to ride out that morning?”

The inquiry at once recalled the scene of the preceding day ; and tenderness again giving place to resentment, she replied, with some degree of haughtiness, “ Supposing I should, my lord—What then ?”

“ I would request to have the pleasure

of attending you," answered Harold, much hurt at her manner; "but, perhaps, you are offended at my not having gone yesterday. Did you know how greatly I lamented the deprivation, you would, I think, accord me your forgiveness."

"'Tis of no consequence, my lord," returned Gabrielle, still more indignantly; "I have not the vanity to suppose my society could afford you any compensation for the engagement you would have been obliged to relinquish;" and, without waiting his reply, she was hastening towards the door, but Harold followed her, and seizing her struggling hand, exclaimed—

"Gabrielle, you are angry. Do not let me go without knowing the occasion of your displeasure."

"You are quite mistaken, my lord," she replied, striving to disengage her hand. "If you are conscious of nothing that *deserves* my resentment, I am my-

self very well disposed to acquit your lordship of every intention to offend me."

Harold coloured, sighed—and was silent.

At that moment some one approached the door, and Gabrielle took advantage of Berrington's entrance to escape from the apartment.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed he; in some alarm. "Has any thing passed between you and Miss Montgomery?"

"Oh, Berrington!" answered Harold, in a tone indicative of his mental anguish, "something more than common must have occasioned the alteration in Gabrielle's behaviour. It cannot arise solely from caprice."

"What then is it," said Berrington, sarcastically, "since your own conduct is too irreproachable to admit of censure?"

"Spare your innuendos, Berrington," exclaimed Harold. "Whatever have

been my transgressions, they have not affected her."

"Not yesterday, perhaps, nor last night. Oh, Harold, you little know her sex, if you can think so."

"In the morning, at least, I offended unknowingly."

"But at night"—

"For God's sake," exclaimed Harold, do not torture me thus. I will fly to Gabrielle—confess my fault, and implore forgiveness."

"Aye, do," replied Berrington, with a sneer; "I already anticipate the reception you will meet with. If you are desirous of making an everlasting breach between you, I could not point out a more effectual way."

"What then would you advise me to do?"

"Poor Harold! I see you are yet a novice in these matters, and 'twill be charity to instruct you. You ask my advice, how to proceed with this capricious

beauty. Leave her to herself—and I will venture to predict a speedy descent from her present heights ; but, if you once furnish her with arms against you, it will afford a pretext for the renewal of these scenes at a future period, and implant distrust in her mind, which you may not find it an easy task to remove.”

“ But the scene of yesterday,” sighed Harold, “ which my own fatal imprudence prevents me from explaining—”

“ Poh, nonsense !” exclaimed Berrington ; “ keep your own counsel, and she will know nothing of the matter. And now we have settled this affair, will you go with me to Tattersal’s ? I have just purchased a horse, of which I should like to have your opinion.”

Lord Harold complied, though with a heavy heart ; and from that day the estrangement between the lovers continued to increase. The ill health of Col. Leslie afforded a plausible excuse for Gabrielle’s long and frequent visits in Harley-street ;

and the reluctance she would have felt in leaving Lady Harold so much alone, was obviated by the presence of Lady Emily Desmond, who was a visitor in Portman-square, during the absence of the Earl of Temora in Ireland, whither he had been suddenly called by business, which admitted not of delay.

The partiality her ladyship had at first conceived for this charming girl was soon augmented into attachment, by a more intimate acquaintance ; and Harold, who regarded her as a lovely and interesting child, treated her with the affectionate familiarity he would have testified for an amiable and beloved sister. But, young as she was, Lady Emily possessed a sensibility of heart uncommon at her years ; and Harold little dreamed that this child of fifteen, whose beauty and simplicity charmed his fancy, without endangering his repose, and to whom he behaved with the same freedom as if she had been a sister, was in reality the

victim of an attachment as fervent as it was romantic, and whose object was no other than himself, but so it was.

Early deprived of her mother, and brought up in retirement, under the superintendence of an aunt, who was herself the most romantic of human beings, Lady Emily naturally imbibed the sentiments and opinions of one whom she loved with all the ardor of her affectionate disposition. At an age when other girls are occupied with their juvenile pastimes, her chief delight was the perusal of those romantic tales, which warm the imagination, and melt the young heart to a degree of dangerous softness. Her progress in every branch of education was astonishing for her age, and her imprudent instructress suffered her to indulge her love of reading, by an unrestrained perusal of *all* the authors that filled the shelves of the old library of Temora Castle—Italian poets, whose language breathed nothing but love, and the senti-

mental pages of French and German novelists, were committed indiscriminately to the hands of this mere child ; and from these studies the mind and feelings of Lady Emily attained a premature ripeness, contrasting forcibly with the simplicity of her manners, and her total ignorance of the world.

But, as blossoms that are forced to an unnatural maturity are weaker than those produced in their proper season, so in the human mind, thus early supplied with aliment unfitted to its half-expanded capacities, a sickly beauty is substituted for strength and perfection. Under this erroneous tuition, and immured in a seclusion where every scene and object was calculated to nourish enthusiasm, the character of Lady Emily Desmond became a mixture of romance, sentiment, and weakness. All the amiable feelings and gentle virtues were united in her disposition. She loved her father and her aunt with the fondest affection—was grateful for

the slightest display of kindness from her friends, and was benevolence and sensibility personified ; but her benevolence was indiscriminate, and without judgment : her sensibility of that kind which

“Could weep
O'er dying roses, and at blossom's fall.”

And she was utterly destitute of that fortitude which is requisite to enable the children of mortality to meet, with becoming dignity, the inevitable trials of life.

Thus gifted, with loveliness of person, and sweetness of manners, with a mind thus constituted, and feelings even more ardent than the generality of her warm-hearted countrywomen, Lady Emily Desmond entered upon the great theatre of life ; and the first steps of her progress were marked by error and misfortune.

She met Lord Harold, as was before related, at his mother's house, who appeared to her the most handsome and

fascinating young man she had ever beheld ; and the admiration he excited, instead of being checked by the judicious admonitions of Lady Barbara Desmond, her aunt, was encouraged by the indiscreet encomiums of the good lady on the beauty of his person, and the elegance of his manners ; while she detailed, without a moment's reflection on the probable danger to her niece, every thing she had heard related of his talents and accomplishments to an ear which listened with secret delight to the enchanting theme. It would have been a kind of heresy against all her received ideas of love and sentiment, if Lady Emily had been insensible to such perfections, and the poor girl was absolutely talked into a serious penchant for Harold before they again met, when the visions, in which her warm imagination had been indulging, were all dissipated by the knowledge of his engagement to Miss Montgomery. The shock was severe ; but, with a romantic

enthusiasm, perfectly consistent with her avowed notions, she secretly resolved never to love another, but to die, if she could not live for Harold ; and this resolution was very wisely strengthened by her aunt, who was a perfect fatalist on the subject of love, and experienced a sensible pleasure in the idea of her lovely unhappy Emily being herself the heroine of a tender tale, as singular and romantic as any of those she delighted in.

Yet, while she thus mingled tear for tear, and sigh for sigh, with the pensive, sentimental Emily, who seemed to seek out every possible cause of unhappiness, she failed not to insinuate, from time to time, that something might yet happen to break off an engagement which was, perhaps, only founded on motives of interest, or a desire of gratifying the wishes of his mother. "Such family compacts," she said, "often came to nothing," and as she could not have been persuaded that the charming Emily was any way

inferior to Miss Montgomery, what, in that case, should prevent Lord Harold from becoming the admirer of her darling?

With these erroneous sentiments, and unable to summon sufficient resolution to distress the fair misguided victim of romantic enthusiasm, Lady Barbara did not lay any restraint on her niece's visits in Portman Square, which served, from the opportunities they afforded her of being in Harold's society, to increase the unfortunate prepossession of this devoted girl. From having been continually told that love is unconquerable, she fully believed it was so, and consequently made no effort to overcome her misplaced attachment, which received daily augmentation from the affectionate familiarity with which she was treated by Harold, who never suspected that, by this conduct, he was innocently destroying the peace of a lovely girl, whom he sincerely

admired, and for whose welfare he felt a brotherly interest.

Lady Emily soon discovered that some misunderstanding existed between Gabrielle and Lord Harold, and, for a moment, a gleam of hope animated her desponding mind ; but it was only transitory : her heart was too generous to allow of her founding her own prospect of happiness on the destruction of another's, and the evident wretchedness of Harold too plainly convinced her that his affections were unalienably devoted to Miss Montgomery.

Many were the secret tears this conviction cost Lady Emily, while, with an enthusiasm perfectly consistent with the romance of her disposition, she felt herself capable of sacrificing happiness, nay, life itself, could she have insured his felicity. Alas ! she had not even the consolation of his knowing how deeply she sympathised in his sorrows ; for Ha-

rold supposed her too young for such a confidence, little thinking that, in her, all the pangs he suffered were aggravated by those of jealousy.

This, at least, was not included in the catalogue of his ills, since his minutest scrutiny had been unable to discover anything in the conduct of Gabrielle which could authorize a suspicion of her attachment to another. Of his own sex, Berrington appeared most in her confidence, and received the greatest marks of her attention, and he was the last person who would have excited a sensation of jealousy in Harold, who fully acquitted Gabrielle of the charge of inconstancy, however he might accuse her of coquetry and caprice.

The two latter, he began to think, were inherent in her nature ; and he was sometimes tempted to doubt her ever having cherished any tender sentiments in his favour, and that the conduct which had first suggested the belief, was, in fact,

only a refined piece of feminine art, which she no longer considered it necessary to adopt.

These injurious ideas were encouraged by Berrington, who, while he continually detailed to Gabrielle, some fresh instance of pretended profligacy in Harold, endeavoured to convince the latter, that the change occasioned by his own base suggestions, was solely to be imputed to the caprice natural to her sex, and a desire of discovering the extent of her influence over him, before she finally consented to a union which would confirm his authority for life.

CHAP. X.

AN incident that occurred at this period had nearly destroyed all the hopes which Berrington began to cherish, of

effecting a complete separation between Lord Harold and his lovely, deluded mistress, and threatened to frustrate all the projects he had employed so much art and subtilty to promote. This incident was an order for the immediate embarkation of his regiment for Sicily, and Berrington, in consternation, anticipated the entire ruin of all his interested schemes. Once freed from his interference, he had no doubt but the confidence formerly existing between the lovers, would be again restored, and a mutual explanation would not only produce reconciliation, but eventually deprive him of the friendship of both parties, by disclosing the deceitful conduct he had pursued.

To one less skilled in Machiavelism, the prospect before him would have presented nothing but despair. Berrington, however, was fertile in expedients, and it soon occurred to him, that could he by any means prevail on Harold to accompany him to Sicily, the event that had at first

appeared so portentous, might in reality serve to advance his designs, by effecting a separation between him and Gabrielle. Of the consent of Harold he entertained not a doubt ; for it could scarcely have been solicited at a better time, when circumstances were combined to render home uncomfortable, and his mind restless and desponding, could not fail of finding any change acceptable.

While he was still deliberating on the execution of this new project, Harold entered the apartment. The unusual flush in his cheek, and the more than common discontent which lowered upon his brow, convinced Berrington that some recent event had greatly disconcerted his friend, whose incoherent exclamations soon acquainted him with the cause. Gabrielle had that morning been denied to him when he called in Harley-street, and secretly assured she was at home, he felt highly resentful at what he considered as a marked indica-

tion of her indifference and neglect. Berrington, as usual, increased the irritation this occurrence had excited in the mind of Harold, by his artful insinuations ; and when he believed these irascible feelings were wrought up to a proper height, he abruptly introduced the subject of the Sicilian expedition, and after largely expatiating on the pleasure he anticipated from it, ventured to hint the gratification he should derive from the society of his beloved friend, could he by any means be prevailed upon to accompany him.

“ Certainly,” replied Harold, “ there is nothing that would be more agreeable to me than such a scheme. It has long been my wish to go abroad.”

“ What, then, should prevent your now accompanying me to Sicily ?”

“ Not any thing, that I know of,” answered Harold, with a half suppressed sigh, “ if I can overcome the reluctance

my mother will probably show to my departure."

"Oh! I will answer for obtaining her ladyship's acquiescence, if you will leave the management of it to me. Have you any other objection?"

"Oh, no! certainly not! What other can I have?"

"Why, none, except a little lurking affection for a certain capricious fair one, which might make you unwilling to leave England; but seriously, Harold, I consider absence as the best possible resource in your case. If Miss Montgomery ever loved you, as I know you formerly supposed she did, it will be the only means of reviving her expiring tenderness. If, on the contrary, you have been deceived in your conjectures, it will afford you an opportunity of emancipating yourself from the chains that have so long held you captive."

Convinced by these and similar argu-

ments, of the propriety of the projected scheme, Harold invested his friend with full powers to break the matter to his mother, who lost no time in availing himself of the permission he had obtained, and accordingly communicated to Lady Harold, without delay, the wishes of her son to accompany him in his intended expedition. He found her ladyship, as had been previously suggested to him, very averse to the idea of a separation, which appeared to her extremely ill timed under the existing circumstances in which Harold was placed, in regard to his avowed engagement with Miss Montgomery ; but Berrington was not easily to be repulsed in a matter that so deeply concerned himself, and he endeavoured to excite the fears of Lady Harold for the health of this darling son, which seemed, he was sorry to observe, in a declining state ; and it was his opinion, that change of scene, and particularly a removal to a

warmer and more salubrious climate, might be of essential benefit.

Berrington had touched upon a point where Lady Harold was most vulnerable. She had herself observed a visible alteration in Harold's appearance since their residence in town, and her maternal feelings immediately taking the alarm, produced a number of interrogations, which were answered by Berrington with a degree of ambiguity that served to confirm her apprehensions, and after half an hour's further conversation, she became as anxious for the accomplishment of the design in question, as Berrington himself could desire. Harold received her full consent to his wishes ; and it was finally arranged that he should hold himself in readiness to attend his friend in the course of the following week.

With a heart throbbing with ill concealed pleasure, Berrington repaired to Harley-street, and was admitted to the

presence of Gabrielle, whom he found alone, and extremely dejected. The task of attending the melancholy Leslie, who was at this time confined to his room with a severe bilious attack, was but little calculated to cheer her spirits, oppressed by the weight of her own secret sorrows, and the consciousness of being unable to retain her self-possession before Harold, had that morning prompted the denial by which he had been so greatly offended.

The conversation of Berrington, which was even more than usually animated and amusing, seemed in some measure to dispel the sadness that oppressed her, and it was with real regret she heard of his approaching departure. What then was her emotion, when she was informed of Harold's intention to accompany him, and that every thing had been arranged for the journey, without once asking her opinion, without even acquainting her with his designs.

“Harold departing from England,”

she exclaimed, in a tone of inexpressible anguish, "and I thus ignorant of his proceedings. Surely, surely, Mr. Berrington, you cannot be serious in your assertion."

"Believe me, on my honour," replied Berrington, with an affected solemnity. "But why, my dear Miss Montgomery, should this event distress you, as I too plainly perceive it does? A temporary absence from England may, perhaps, be really advantageous to Lord Harold, as it will, probably, dissolve some imprudent connections he has formed here; and he will still, you know, be under my eye."

"But to make all his arrangements without even letting me know his intentions."

"He probably did not think it necessary to consult you on the occasion, as your name was not mentioned in the conversation that took place between us."

"No!" exclaimed Gabrielle, with bitterness. "I am no longer an object in

his thoughts nor his concerns ; but, if he supposes to mortify me by this appearance of neglect, he will be mistaken—I can meet the separation with the same indifference as himself.”

Notwithstanding this heroic assertion, Gabrielle passed the following day in the deepest affliction. The prospect of being soon separated from him, and that too, for an indefinite period, convinced her that Harold was still dear as ever to her heart, from the anguish with which that heart was now wrung, at the idea of his departure. In vain she recalled to her recollection all the tales she had heard to his disadvantage—even the last instance of his neglect, which she had just received. Love triumphed over every suggestion, and Gabrielle felt herself unable to struggle against a weakness which her reason condemned.

In the evening a note arrived from Lady Harold, acquainting her with her son's intended departure, and its osten-

sible motive ; and concluding, by requesting she would return to Portman-square, for a few days, previous to his quitting London.

To refuse a compliance with this intreaty would, she knew, very much hurt the feelings of Lady Harold, and might lead to explanations which must either subject herself to the charge of caprice, or criminate Harold in the eyes of his mother ; nor could the situation of Colonel Leslie be alledged as an excuse for not going, as he was sufficiently amended to allow of her leaving him for a few days.

“ No, Harold,” she mentally exclaimed, “ unworthily as you have treated me, never shall Gabrielle be the person to injure you in the opinion of those you love. ’Tis but another effort to suffer in silence ; and I am now, alas, too well versed in the art, to shrink from the trial that awaits me.”

Gabrielle accordingly went the following day to Portman-square ; where, to

her melancholy imagination, every thing seemed to wear an appearance of constraint and sadness. Harold looking, as had been represented to her, extremely unwell, yet, struggling to conceal his indisposition, and assuming an air of gaiety foreign to his feelings. His mother, a prey to apprehension, on his account, and Lady Emily Desmond, who was still with them, reserved in her manners, and in reality the most miserable of the party. Berrington alone appeared the same as usual. All his leisure hours were passed in Portman-square, and his society and conversation afforded no inconsiderable relief to the melancholy group who were there assembled.

One evening the conversation turned on the approaching journey—and many questions were addressed to Gabrielle, concerning the country they were going to visit, of which she might, in fact, be considered a native, the greatest part of

her life having been passed there. "The idea of Sicily," she at length said, "is connected, in my mind, with the sweetest and most tender remembrances. The careless days of childhood, the jocund scenes of early youth, are associated with it in my memory, and the name of Sicily sounds in my ear like the sweet strains which charm our juvenile years, and which are never heard afterwards, but with an emotion of inexpressible tenderness and regret."

"And can you not, my dear," said Lady Harold, "charge our travellers with some commission to this favoured clime? Is there no friend there, to whom you would wish to be remembered? No spot, of whose present state you would like to be informed?"

"I have already, madam," replied Gabrielle, "prepared letters for the few friends who will be anxious to hear of my welfare. And there is one spot which is

very dear to my memory, which it would give me pleasure to hear was not quite neglected, since my departure. Should you," she continued, "have an opportunity, you will, perhaps, pay a visit to the Villa de Marino, near Messina, where I spent the happiest hours of my life. Adjoining the grounds, and partly included in them, is a kind of rustic cemetery, where my parents lie interred; and I should like to know whether the simple monument, that filial affection erected over their ashes, still remains uninjured by the devastating hand of war, and the ravages of the elements."

The request of Gabrielle was made indiscriminately to Lord Harold and his friend, but her eyes were directed only to the former; and amid the tears which obscured their lustre, he fancied he could discern an expression of their former tenderness. With an involuntary emotion he leaned over the back of the chair where she sat, and softly murmured to her, in

the words which Rousseau attributes to St. Prene—

“ Nos cœurs repondent encore.”

Gabrielle blushed, and a half-suppressed sigh caught his ear, when Berrington, who watched every motion of the lovers with a jealous eye, contrived to call off her attention, and prevented any farther attempt, on the part of Lord Harold, to engage her in a private conversation that evening.

The day previous to that fixed for his departure, our hero, unexpectedly, found himself alone with Gabrielle—an extraordinary circumstance, when we consider on the one hand the unceasing vigilance exerted by Berrington to keep them asunder, and on the other, the different motives which influenced them to shun any thing that bore the appearance of a premeditated conference; but Berrington was engaged in his regimental duties,

which had detained him beyond his usual hour ; and accident, unsolicited by either party, thus afforded the lovers an interview, which would have placed the confidant on the rack, had he suspected the circumstance. The embarrassment they mutually felt, was visible to each ; but Harold was the first to recover himself—and, after conversing a short time on the subject of his journey, exclaimed, rather abruptly—“ I suppose, Gabrielle, I shall sometimes hear of you, during my absence ? ”

“ From your mother, my lord, certainly,” replied Gabrielle, after a moment’s silence ; “ and I shall be happy to hear of your lordship’s proceedings through the same channel.” “ And through another likewise,” she might have added ; for Berrington was already under an engagement to acquaint her with every incident relative to Harold, whose heart sunk at this implied intention of not holding a correspondence with him while

he was absent ; and he was for some moments unable to reply. “ Gabrielle,” he at length said, “ I had thought that, under the circumstances in which the world imagine we are mutually placed, such punctilios as these might have been dispensed with. We are now on the eve of a long, perhaps a final, separation, and I should like to hear from your own lips the occasion of that change in your behaviour, which has long been too evident to be denied. Surely, I may demand this satisfaction, from the generosity of Miss Montgomery ; which tenderness alone would not induce her to grant me.”

“ Why,” answered Gabrielle, speaking with difficulty, “ should your lordship be so ready to suspect a change, unless you are secretly conscious of some cause to authorize it ? Your silence, my lord, implies this consciousness ; and I will ingenuously confess, that many things have reached my ear, which have led me to believe that my confidence in your prin-

ciples has been misplaced. In short, Harold, that your character is altogether different from what I once thought it, and those virtues fictitious, with which a trusting heart, and a romantic fancy had invested you on our first acquaintance."

"And who was the author of these reports?" exclaimed Harold, with vehemence.

"That, my lord," replied Gabrielle, you must excuse my keeping to myself—it was one that bore you no ill will, and who is my friend ; and such reports are of little consequence, if you are conscious they are unmerited."

"And what," asked Harold, with a kind of desperate resolution, "are the charges brought against me?"

"Several," returned Gabrielle, deeply blushing, "which I know not how to mention—spare me, therefore, the recital, and tell me at once, that since our residence in town you have never gamed—never associated with persons, whose pre-

sence would crimson the pure cheek of innocence with shame and indignation.— You are agitated, Harold—you do not answer me. Oh, then, it is indeed, true!" and Gabrielle covered her face with her hands, to hide the tears which bedewed it.

The heart of Harold, at this moment, was wrung with conflicting sensations. He was too conscious of the errors into which he had been inadvertently betrayed by the profligate companions of Berrington, to plead guiltless to the charges against him; while he still felt too much devoted to virtue, in the person of one of its purest votaries, to despair entirely of regaining her good opinion. His expectations would, probably, have been fully realized, had he then made an unreserved confession of his *real* transgressions to Gabrielle, who would consequently have known how greatly they had been exaggerated by the representations of his perfidious friend. But Harold was yet an

unpractised wanderer in the paths of error, and the same delicate and acute sense of feeling which magnified his faults in his own opinion, prevented his attempting any extenuation of them to the deluded object of his affection.

A long silence, interrupted only by mutual sighs, was at length broken by Harold, who, as he pressed the unresisting hand of Gabrielle in his own, exclaimed mournfully—

“Dearest, lovliest of women, I confess myself unworthy of thy pure virtue, yet, oh! believe me, Gabrielle, I am not utterly abandoned. Restore me only to the possession of that affection, which I once ventured to suppose my own, and I will yet strive to prove myself deserving of your goodness.”

“On yourself alone, my lord,” replied Miss Montgomery, “it depends to regain those sentiments, which were, I will not deny it, once bestowed as a just tribute to your worth and talents; but you

know my resolution is unmoveable, never to unite my destiny to any man's whose principles I disapprove, however fair he may stand in the eyes of the world—however dear," she added, casting down her eyes, "he may be to my own heart. Let your future conduct, Harold, convince me your errors have been only the venial ones of youth and thoughtlessness, and perhaps I may not prove inexorable in my resentment"—and with a tear of tenderness lurking in her eye, and a returning smile hovering round her lovely lip, Gabrielle extended her hand to Harold, who kissed it in a transport of gratitude, and, with the most animated expressions of joy, repeated a thousand vows never again to give her cause to doubt his affection, or the rectitude of his conduct. "And you will now write to me, Gabrielle," he exclaimed in a tone of long suppressed pleasure.

"Gently, my good lord, that will depend on circumstances, and as you behave. Per-

haps I may ; but I hear some one at the door, so get you gone till you have exchanged these raptures for common place looks and manners."

Harold obeyed, and fortunately for him had no opportunity, previous to their departure, of detailing this conversation to Berrington, who would have lost no time in endeavouring to disturb the harmony so unexpectedly restored between the lovers his arts were aiming to disunite.

CHAP. XI.

WE will not tire the indulgent reader by a minute detail of Lord Harold's farewell of the friends by whom he was so tenderly beloved, neither recount the tears shed by his mother and Miss Montgomery, nor those which bedewed the pale cheeks of the lovely unhappy Lady Emily.

“Those who have known what 'tis to doat upon
A few dear objects”

do not require a description of such scenes, and to any other it would appear still more superfluous. Harold and his charming mistress parted on the best possible terms; for the moment of separation is a great reconciler of differences between those that love, and Gabrielle had no leisure for the remembrance of past offences. Harold's departure, and the hopes awakened by their late confer-

ence engrossed every thought, while our hero felt his mind relieved from the heavy weight which had so long oppressed him, and full of fond anticipations of future happiness, his air and manners no longer wore the appearance of despondency.

The change failed not to excite the observation of Berrington, and when Harold, in answer to his enquiries, unbosomed himself to this perfidious confidant, with the frankness of unsuspecting friendship, the latter at once trembled at the precipice over which he had been suspended, and congratulated himself on the success of his scheme to effect a separation between two beings, who were destined to awaken in his mind all the various emotions of desire, jealousy, and hatred. To time and his own arts he trusted, to render this separation eternal.

Our travellers had a swift and prosperous voyage, and the fine talents of Harold, no longer being clouded by despondency, he again experienced his accus-

tomed pleasure from the indulgence of those delightful reveries of the imagination, which are awakened in the mind of genius, by the view of objects associated with its favourite recollections. The first glance of the classic shores of Italy had all the effect of enchantment on his ardent feelings and vivid fancy, and, as he hung over the vessel's side, he delivered himself up, without restraint, to the influence of emotions, which can only be conceived by a congenial mind. The distant land, whose blue outline was scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding main, the balmy breezes that sported in the sails of the vessel, and the moon-light waves, which sparkled beneath her prow as she pursued her steady course through the world of waters, all harmonized with the sensations he experienced, and the creative imagery of a glowing fancy peopled these lovely shores with beings worthy of their charms—beings who exist no longer, but in the

heaven-inspired strains which transmit to a degenerated age the record of their deeds and virtues. In the imagination of Harold, however, they still seemed to live, and to invite his approach to scenes which he hailed with devotion, as warm as ever lover felt for the spot that contained the idol of his affections.

Involuntarily he sighed for some congenial spirit to share the feelings of the hour, but none such were to be found in the herd of heartless, dissipated beings who surrounded him ; and Berrington, the selfish, narrow-minded, and designing Berrington, would have been as unable as the others to appreciate emotions which have their source in feelings too ennobling to be ever “ to th’ illiberal thought allied.”

It was a lovely evening in the month of April, when the *Claudine* frigate entered the straits of Messina, and as they approached the harbour, the eye of Harold wandered with delightful admira-

tion to every surrounding object, which acquired additional beauty from the glowing brilliancy of an Italian sun-set, whose golden radiance glistened on the spires and casements of the city, and touched with a rosy hue the streamers of the vessels in the port. The shore was thronged with spectators to see the landing of the troops, and many a gay felucca glided over the waves filled with parties of noble and wealthy Sicilians, who were enjoying the freshness of the evening breezes, and the gaiety of the surrounding scene, while the measured sound of the oars mingled at intervals with the voices of the mariners as they sang their vesper hymn to the virgin, completed the effect produced upon the senses of Harold, by the novel and striking scene he now beheld, and he mentally exclaimed from the impulse of an involuntary emotion—

“ Would thou wert here, beloved Gabrielle, to participate in the feelings with which I hail the land that gave thee

birth, and which acquire from that circumstance only, an indescribable interest in the eyes of thy Harold."

He was aroused from the train of thought to which this reflection had given rise, by the noise and bustle of the troops who were preparing to leave the vessel. Harold, to whom the scene afforded much amusement, was one of the last that quitted her, and repaired with his companion to an hotel, where the remainder of the evening was devoted to conviviality, in which our hero joined, with a due remembrance of the promises pledged to Gabrielle previous to his departure from England.

Harold was soon disgusted with the tumult of a public inn, which had been made the temporary head-quarters of the regiment just arrived, and in the course of a few days, he removed to a retired and private lodging in the vicinity of the city, much against the wishes of Berrington, whose military duty confined him a

good deal at the garrison, and who was unwilling, not to lose the constant society of Harold, which he could not dispense with, but to be deprived of the opportunities afforded by daily occurrences of circumventing every plan of his deluded friend, which had a reference to his union with Miss Montgomery.

But Harold had a double motive for this proceeding, in his natural desire of leisure and independence, and a firm resolution to avoid, as far as was possible, associating with the profligate companions who had already occasioned him so much uneasiness. Berrington was, therefore, obliged to acquiesce in a measure he by no means approved, and consoled himself by the hope that chance would produce some circumstance which might serve as a ground of fresh accusation against Harold. The letters with which the travellers had been furnished, previous to their departure, procured them an introduction to several respectable families

in Messina, whose society agreeably diversified the scene. Public amusements were not wanting to fill up any remaining void, and in the seclusion of his own pleasant and tranquil dwelling, Harold had ample leisure for the indulgence of his favourite pursuits, relieved occasionally by the excursions in the neighbourhood.

But the present calm was only illusive, and Harold was soon fated to experience a renewal of his past uneasiness on the subject most interesting to his feelings, the affection of Gabrielle Montgomery, to whom he had written immediately on his arrival, a letter expressive of all his emotions since they parted, and fraught with the most sincere and animated tenderness. To this letter he received no answer; and though Gabrielle had not expressly promised she would write, he felt deeply hurt and disappointed at her not doing so. A second and third epistle had no better success; and all

the doubts and suspicions of Harold again returned. From his mother he heard that Gabrielle was well, and gone with her uncle to Weymouth for a month or two ; and in the hope that his former letters had not reached her in consequence of her departure from London, (though the fact seemed hardly probable,) he again wrote to her, and directed his letter to Weymouth, with an earnest entreaty for an immediate answer.

No answer, however, was received, and Harold influenced alike by pride and resentment, wrote no more ; nor did he from that time make any mention of Gabrielle in the letters he addressed to his mother, who thought it extraordinary, and secretly exclaimed against the caprice and inconstancy of man.

It seems scarcely necessary to say, that Harold's letters to Miss Montgomery never reached their destination, but were all intercepted by a trusty agent employed by Berrington, who hoped by this pro-

ceeding to prepare the mind of Gabrielle for the more ready reception of any fresh allegation against Harold, when circumstances occurred which might give a plausible colour to the inventions of his malignant heart ; nor was it long before an opportunity occurred of gratifying his most sanguine expectations.

And here we will pause a moment, ere we enter upon a period of our hero's history, which was fated to shadow all his future days with error, and misfortune. As yet we have only known him betrayed into the venial transgressions of ardent and incautious youth ; his fame was not yet darkened, nor his character sullied in the eyes of the worthy and honourable part of mankind. We must now accompany him into scenes which eventually destroyed his peace and his felicity, and added the pangs of remorse to the anguish already inflicted by inauspicious love, and while we thus pursue his progress through the flowery

paths of error to the precipice where all his earthly happiness was dashed in pieces, may the unwary be warned by his fall to shun the first temptation to vice, and fly from the syren, though she woo him in a form lovely as the one whose sorceries blasted the fair promise of Harold's opening years, and tore from his brows the garland intertwined by love and genius, ere half its blossoms were disclosed.

CHAP. XII.

THE tranquillity of mind which Harold had so lately recovered, was again disturbed by the late occurrence. His former pursuits and pleasures became tasteless and insipid, and he sought in society and dissipation a relief from the feelings that oppressed him. But it was a vain attempt, for, in the language of the poet,

Tho' pleasure fire the maddening soul,
The heart, the heart is lonely still ;

and Harold sighed in bitterness over the remembrance of past days, never he feared to be renewed again.

One evening Berrington perceiving him unusually dejected, proposed a ride, and they had proceeded about a couple of leagues from the city, when an unexpected turn in the road brought them in view of a villa, beautifully situated on a rising

ground screened by woods, and commanding a fine prospect, which was terminated by the blue waters of the straits of Messina, and the opposite shore of Calabria, appearing in the distance like an evening mist.

“Surely,” exclaimed Berrington, after a momentary survey of the surrounding scene, “this must be the Villa di Marino, from the description given of it by Miss Montgomery. What say you, Harold, shall we take this opportunity of executing her commission?”

“Just as you please,” replied Harold sullenly; and ordering the groom to hold their horses, they alighted, and proceeded by a foot-path to the villa.

The spot they sought had been minutely described by Gabrielle, and they entered a kind of cemetery, divided from the park by a low inclosure of laurel and myrtle, now blossoming in full luxuriance. A small building stood within this inclosure, which had once been a chapel;

but was now a picturesque ruin, whose broken walls were thickly mantled with ivy and other plants which "love the shade." At the extremity of the cemetery, under a clump of limes, stood the mausoleum of Gabrielle's departed parents, consisting only of a pedestal of white marble supporting an urn of the same material, simply ornamented with a wreath of cypress, exquisitely carved, entwined around it.

On a small tablet beneath the urn was an inscription recording the names and ages of the deceased, with the following lines from Young :—

"Farewell ! but not for ever Hope replies,
Trace but *their* steps and meet *them* in the skies."

Harold gazed around him with an emotion he would have been ashamed to acknowledge even to himself, and he continued pensively leaning against the monument, almost unconscious of the presence of Berrington, when he was

startled by the sound of approaching voices, and on looking up beheld a lady, environed by a group of children, advancing from the park, who, on perceiving the strangers, stopped, as if deliberating whether she should proceed. Conscious of being intruders, Harold and his companion felt, for a moment, embarrassed; but politeness instantly dictated the conduct to be pursued, and they approached the fair stranger to apologize for their apparent rudeness.

Berrington, who was a few paces before his friend, addressed her first, and the exclamations of—"Good Heaven! the Countess of Marchmont!" and "Can it be possible I see Mr. Berrington!" discovered to Harold a mutual recognition between the parties, who appeared equally surprised, and, he thought, somewhat confused, at this unexpected rencontre. He had, however, no opportunity for further remark, as, after a moment's conversation with the countess, Berrington

approached Harold, whose delicacy had hitherto prevented his advancing, and presented him to her ladyship, who received him with the ease of an old acquaintance, while in a voice, modulated by harmony itself, she expressed "the pleasure it gave her to meet, at this distance from her native land, a countryman who did so much honour to it by his talents. as Lord Harold."

Our hero bowed his sense of the compliment, while he surveyed the fair speaker with a gaze of surprised and admiring curiosity, and never, perhaps, were united in one form such a brilliant assemblage of charms as those which graced the beautiful Countess of Marchmont; and the attractions of her person were rendered still more striking by the unstudied, yet elegant simplicity of her attire. Her children, charming as their mother, resembled infant Loves, as they gaily sported around her, with the careless

grace of childhood, and Harold secretly longed to join in the gambols of these lovely innocent creatures, who continued to chase butterflies and gather flowers, regardless of the presence of himself and his companion. He was awakened from his trance of admiration by the voice of Lady Marchmont, who intreated them to accompany her to the villa. "We are quite alone," she added, "and my lord will be charmed with such an acquisition to our domestic circle, and particularly with again seeing our old friend, Mr. Berrington."

"Some other time we will have the pleasure of paying our compliments to Lord Marchmont," replied Berrington, bowing; "but at present we are compelled to decline your ladyship's polite invitation, as our horses are waiting at the entrance of the park to convey us back to Messina."

"We will send for them, then; for positively you must go. You surely are

not so ungallant as to refuse to escort a lady safe home who solicits your protection?"

There was no resisting the smile that accompanied these words. A peasant boy, that happened to pass at the moment, was dispatched by her ladyship with orders for the groom to bring the horses to the villa, and Berrington offered his arm to its fair mistress, while Harold lingered behind a few paces with the children, who readily admitted him into their little coterie, and he had made no inconsiderable progress towards an intimacy before they arrived at the end of their walk.

On entering the house, Lady Marchmont conducted her guests to the drawing-room, and requesting them to excuse her absence for a few moments, left them to make their own observations on the singularity of the late adventure. "Methinks, Berrington," exclaimed Lord Harold, "I ought to congratulate you on so

unexpectedly recognizing an old acquaintance in our fair hostess. I do not remember to have heard before of your intimacy with the family of the Earl of Marchmont."

"Oh, it is quite an old connexion; I wonder I never mentioned it to you; but then it is so long since I have heard or seen any thing of them, I suppose it escaped my memory."

"Her ladyship, I thought, seemed rather embarrassed when you first met," observed Harold, inquisitively.

"Poor thing! it was natural enough. Our fathers were near neighbours, and many of our childish hours were consequently passed together. Her rank in society was very different from what it now is, and the notice of Sir Godfrey Berrington's family was then regarded as an honour. Not to make a long story, Albina Sidney was not a being to be viewed with indifference, and she was the object of a boyish attachment, which ex-

cited the serious and decided disapprobation of my friends."

"And this attachment was mutual?"

"I cannot tell. But she was no stranger to mine; and the delicacy of a woman's feelings in these matters is apt to create a kind of secret consciousness which very well accounts for the emotion you allude to."

"Perfectly so," replied Harold: "I hope, however, her present union has been productive of felicity."

"I can only speak from conjecture," answered his friend, "as she never suffered a hint to escape her on the subject; but from my own observations, and my subsequent knowledge of Albina's disposition, I should think not. On her side it was not a union of love, and I believe Lady Marchmont to be an unhappy, but a truly irreproachable wife."

The entrance of the fair subject of this conversation interrupted it for the present. She was accompanied by her lord, whose

figure formed a striking contrast to the lovely creature beside him, and who had nothing, either in appearance or address, indicative of any particular mental or personal endowments being attached to nobility.

“ Dame Nature passes oft the lordling by,
And showers her choicest gifts on low-born poverty.”

His manners, however, were frank and pleasing, and he welcomed Berrington with the cordiality of an old acquaintance, and Lord Harold with the easy politeness of one habituated to polished society.

Topics of conversation were not wanting to enliven this unexpected meeting, for Berrington had a hundred things to detail of England, and of persons known to the earl, peculiarly interesting to the latter, who had been absent nearly three years from his native country. Harold, in the mean time, was left to amuse her ladyship by such subjects as appeared best.

calculated for the purpose, and never yet did Harold fail of pleasing the woman he wished to entertain. After her guests had partaken of some refreshment, Lady Marchmont proposed showing them the gardens, which were extensive and beautifully laid out; and Harold fancied he could occasionally discern traces of the elegant taste which had, he doubted not, been formerly employed in embellishing their natural beauties.

“ When we came to this place,” observed her ladyship, as they walked along, “ it was a perfect wilderness, having been uninhabited since the death of the last occupier, who was, like ourselves, a native of England. The situation of the villa pleased my lord so well, as to induce him to become a tenant, and we have since had the place put in its present order. It is, as you see, extremely beautiful; and as he appears gratified with his residence, I endeavour to be so likewise.”

“ Amiable woman !” mentally exclaim-

ed Harold, "that man must surely be a churl indeed to whom thou could'st not make any residence delightful." Harold spoke his genuine sentiments, for the tale which Berrington had related of Lady Marchmont did not fail of touching feelings so susceptible as his, to whom it was addressed, and the lovely woman was an object of far inferior interest to the devoted wife of a man she did not love, and the tender mother who seemed to regard her children as her dearest treasures.

With such fanciful colouring does a vivid imagination embellish the objects of its admiration, nor dreams how different they may prove when arrayed in the sober garb of reality.

A pressing invitation to stay all night at the villa was declined by Harold and his friend, on the plea of regimental duty from the latter; and after a promise of shortly renewing the visit, they set out at a late hour on their return to Messina, lighted by the bright beams of a waning

moon, which discovered every object veiled in softer colours than those which had adorned the prospect from the glowing radiance of an evening's sun, when they viewed it a few hours before.

"Well, Harold," exclaimed his friend, after they had rode a considerable distance, without speaking, "and what think you of Lady Marchmont?"

"I think her one of the loveliest of women."

"Not much inferior to the former fair inhabitant of the Villa de Marino, eh, Harold?" said Berrington, archly.

"Psha!" exclaimed Harold, peevishly. "What occasion was there for that observation. My admiration of Lady Marchmont has no connection with an attachment which is fated to be the bane of my existence."

"Oh, certainly not—and I intreat your pardon, if I have offended you by my foolish remark, which I should not have ventured, had I supposed your feelings

were still so irritable on the subject. But, what were we speaking of? Oh, of Lady Marchmont! You agree then with me, that she is very beautiful!

“Undoubtedly,” answered Harold.—
“And, from the little opportunity I have had for observation, she appears no less amiable than lovely.”

“Did you know her ladyship as well as I do?” replied Berrington, “you might, indeed, have made that observation. She has every endowment of person, of manners, and of mind, which can adorn her sex; and I consider her husband as one of the most enviable of men.”

“Are you acquainted with the occasion of their leaving England?”

“Oh, yes. It was a cause which has induced many people to do the same thing. Marchmont has, I believe, been rather extravagant—their affairs got embarrassed—and a temporary trip to the continent was suggested by their friends, as the most probable means of retrieving

matters ; but I did not know that Sicily had been chosen for the place of their retirement, or it would have been another motive for me to have pressed your accompanying me hither."

" Why so ?"

" Because I know what an acquisition we shall find in their acquaintance. But I forgot to ask your opinion of Lord Marchmont ?"

" He appears to me a good sort of man enough ; but certainly not such a one as I should have thought would have been the choice of the fair Albina."

" He, her choice !" exclaimed Berrington, contemptuously ; " surely, Harold, Lady Marchmont does not appear blind or stupid, that you should suspect her of such egregious folly. Her choice, indeed ! Why, I tell you, Harold, he is a mere dolt, a simpleton, who is as insensible to her perfections as this block of marble ;" pointing to a mass which lay by the road side.

“And does he know the very high opinion entertained of him by his *friends*,” said Harold, sarcastically.

Berrington perceived he had, in his eagerness to attain his point, overshot the mark ; and, immediately checking himself, replied, in a cooler manner, “ Oh, I believe his lordship to be a very good sort of man, though not possessing the most brilliant capacities in the world. I assure you, I have a high esteem for him, though a remaining spark of jealousy will, sometimes, make me express myself rather warmly on the subject. Her ladyship, too, may be attached to him, for aught I can tell ; as there is no accounting for the capricious tastes of her sex. At all events, we shall find them a great acquisition to us while we continue here ; and I truly rejoice that last night’s adventure has acquainted us with the place of their abode.”

In this sentiment Harold readily concurred, and the subject was dropped for the present.

The gray dawn began to glimmer in the eastern horizon when they entered the city, and Harold having taken leave of his friend, who was obliged to relieve guard at the garrison, proceeded alone to his lodgings, which were about a mile from Messina. He rode slowly, and as some time had been lost in talking with Berrington before they parted, it was quite light when he arrived at home, and as he felt no inclination to retire to rest at so late an hour, he hastily changed his dress, and sauntered out to enjoy the freshness of the morning, which was breaking in all its beauty.

The sun just risen above the waves gilded their curled and foaming tops, and Heaven, earth, and ocean were fraught with life and loveliness. The fishermen were hauling out their boats ; the shepherd conducting his flock to pasture in the distant valley, and groups of peasant girls hastening to the city with fruits, flowers, and vegetables, singing as they

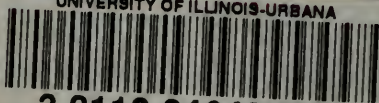
walked along. With a book in his hand, and a thousand sweet images floating in his fancy, Harold pursued his ramble, alternately reading a page of Tasso, and surveying the picturesque forms and lovely objects around him.

After loitering away an hour or two in this manner, he returned to the house, where a neat breakfast prepared by his attentive hostess, awaited his arrival ; and we will now leave him to the enjoyment of his repast, while we draw a slight sketch of characters that must in future hold a conspicuous place in this narrative.

END OF VOL.



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